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States' Struggle

List of Pamphlets in this File

1 Onward, With Limbdi Boycott
— Limbdi Cotton Boycott Committee, Bombay,

2. Deshi Rajyoni Ladhat (Gujarati)
— Manibehn Patel 1938

3. Address of the Dewan of Mysore – June 1938

4. Lawless Limbdi — A.I. States' Peoples' Confe 1939

5. Bhavnagar Praja Parishad – 5 th Conf.
Sardar Vallabhbhai's speech
14 15 May '39

# Onward, With Limbdi Boycott!

"........Perhaps no where has the policy of ruthlessness been pursued with so much precision and persistence as in Limbdi."

—MAHATMA GANDHI

Published by
The Secretaries,
Limbdi Cotton Boycott Committee,
Bombay.

# UNPRECEDENTED ATROCITIES

"Limbdi has become symbolic of a new technique on the part of some of the rulers. This is a technique of the state encouraging gangsterism, dacoity and brutal violence by private individuals or hirelings....But what shall we say to the state which itself encourages this disgusting brutality and gangsterism? What shall we say of Limbdi which has exhibited this? We have much to say and words are feeble vehicle for our thoughts but we shall say it in other and more effective ways when time comes."

—PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU.

* * *

"But Limbdi has improved upon the Rajkot methods of barbarism and brutality......There is no safety of person or property in Limbdi State."

—SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL.

* * *

"Faced the other day with demands for reform backed only by passive protest, the ruler of the little State of Limbdi in Kathiawar is said to have retaliated by organising bands of gangsters who beat, looted and burned. That is an ex-parte statement, which one might be disposed to treat as exaggerated, were it not that 6,000 persons out of a population of 40,000 were driven into flight and took refuge in neighbouring territories."

—"NEW STATESMAN & NATION" OF LONDON.

* * *

It is a shame that there should be such States in India.

—"MODERN REVIEW".

* * *

"They must be extraordinary dacoits, indeed, who have declared a vendetta against the Praja Mandal....From the testimony of these persons and several others the suspicion naturally arises, that the goondas were the tools of some unscrupulous officials."

"BOMBAY CHRONICLE".

* * *

"Our contention is that the Darbar is the organiser of the goondaism. Assuming that the Darbar is innocent, he cannot plead lack of previous knowledge of the probability of violence, since it paraded the threat of violence by loyalists, in a communique. The Darbar is, therefore, either the principal or an accessory to the offence before and after its occurence".

—"FREE PRESS JOURNAL".

* * *

"That inspite of the fact that he knew that attempts would be made to break up the Parishad he did nothing to prevent the mischief, is eloquent of the inspiration behind this exhibition of goondaism. What has the paramount power to say about hooliganism instigated and encouraged by the State administration from which the sufferers are the people of the State?"

—"THE HINDUSTAN TIMES".

# LIMBDI COTTON BOYCOTT IN CHINA

**City Urged To Boycott Limbdi Cotton Arriving Here This Week**

**Indian State Said Ruled By Legalized Gangsterism Under The Sponsorship Of 'Primitive' Tyrant**

"That cotton is tainted with blood," was the comment of Indian leaders in Shanghai ... the boycott of the 532 bales of Limbdi cotton due to arrive here ... of the product in all parts of the world.

**Supported By Gandhi**

Commenting on the Limbdi State, Mr. Gandhi says: "Perhaps nowhere

The "China Press" flared these headlines.

HUNTED and hounded out from one corner to another, chased and driven from one place to another, the blood-tainted Cotton of Limbdi to-day lies idle and helpless in some obscure place, hated and scorned by everybody, and not a single man to touch it.

The State tried its utmost to dispose off the several hundred bales of Cotton that it had appropriated from the hands of the poor and oppressed farmers. It moved heaven and earth. It intrigued and it manoeuvred. It used tricks and false names. It employed all its power and influence. But all of no avail. The power of the resistence of the people proved more than a match for it. Four months of vigorous and watchful propaganda have driven away those hated Cotton-bales into wilderness. And the State now looks on bewildered, exhausted, despaired and desperate. From Baroda, across the land and sea, to the far eastern Kobe, the sympathy, support and solidarity of the people, suffering under a common form of oppression, have provided a glorious example of collective action, unrivalled in the history of such struggles. Everywhere our workers were ahead of the bales. Wherever the bales went, they met with the same fate: either they could not reach their appointed destination or, if they reached, they were soon on their way back to some other obscure destination.

## JAPAN BANGS THE DOORS

Look at the latest fate that this blood-stained Cotton has got itself into. Only a few days back the Boycott Committee received a marvellously encouraging telegram from Kobe, the great City of Japan. Following is the text of the telegram:

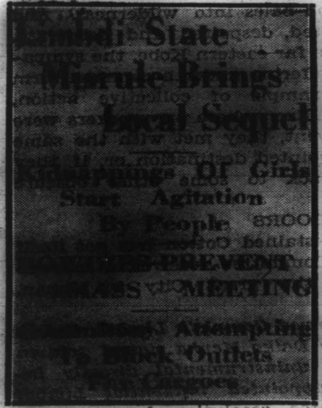
> *"Indians met fourteenth, Resolved Complete Limbdi Cotton Boycott. Cotton traders including Daiko Menka signed solumn undertaking yesterday unhandle uninstrumental directly indirectly Limbdi Cotton. Also appointed influential Limbdi Boycott Committee strictly enforce resolution keep contact Bombay Boycott Office. Traders intimate all Bombay sellers*

*through press that all future Cotton transactions are subject special condition. If found Limbdi rejectable. Local situation guarantees no sale and if not reshipped within three months will be forefeited to government according Japanese Law."*

This solemn and determined resolve of the Indians in Japan, supported by the representative Japanese traders, shows the power of the boycott. Japan has definitely banged the doors against this ill-fated Cotton.

### KOBE'S FIRM RESOLVE

This meeting of Kobe, at which the above resolution was made, and at which representatives of some of the leading Japanese firms were present, received with eager hands the literature relating to the Limbdi atrocities distributed there. The speakers expressed the strong feelings of Indians against Limbdi 'goondaism', and exhorted the Japanese traders to join in the boycott. The exhortation had a rapid response. Signatures soon poured in on the pledge to boycott Limbdi Cotton in every form. They were not content with this. An influential Boycott Committee was formed to work in conjunction with the Bombay Committee. This Committee, promptly, issued a warning to Indian merchants concerned that all future cotton transactions would be subject to the special condition that if the transacted bales were found to belong to Limbdi, all the transactions would automatically become null and void, and the bales would be rejected even after have reached Japan. All the Limbdi Cotton bales reaching Japan after 15th December were declared to be boycotted. An ultimatum of three months would be given to the merchants concerned to transport these boycotted bales back to India. On the 91th day, all the bales still lying rejected on the Japanese soil would be confiscated, in accordance with the Japanese Law.




From "Shanghai Evening Post".

Thus has Japan completed the mighty blockade against the ill-starred Cotton of Limbdi.

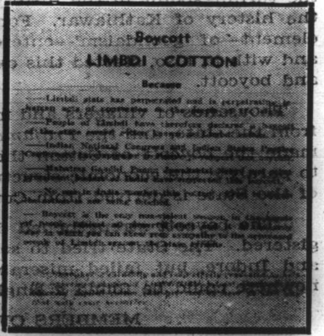
### CHINA'S SPLENDID SUPPORT

But this was only the culmination of the terrible campaign of boycott which had preceded in China. China had shown the way, in a remarkable manner. In fact, no other single, isolated Indian struggle had received such a support in China before.

As soon as it was learnt that some 532 bales of Limbdi's boycotted cotton were on their way to Shanghai, the Boycott Committee, through its workers at Shanghai and elsewhere, launched a raging and tearing campaign of boycott on the Chinese soil. The press, the platform and the radio were ably and promptly utilised. Mr. Amritlal Sheth rushed from Hongkong to Shanghai. A pamphlet, dealing with the Limbdi atrocities, the root cause of the boycott, was soon published and distributed in thousands. The Shanghai papers gave a glaring publicity to this tale of atrocities. *'The Shanghai Evening Post'*, for instance, bore such bold headlines: *'Limbdi State Misrule brings local sequel: kidnappings of girls start agitation by people: Rowdies prevent mass meeting: Committee attempting to block outlets for Cargoes'*. The front page of this paper carried this sensational banner: *"Indian playboy causes Shanghai Cotton boycott"*.

Our Committee had, moreover, received the following letter from the leading Shanghai daily *'The Evening Echo'*:

*"The boycott of Limbdi Cotton has greatly impressed the people here. We have published your literature. 'THE CHINESE PRESS' has also published the tales of Limbdi's 'goondaism'.... We wish you success.*




Front page of the pamphlet distributed in China.

Same sort of propaganda was carried on in all the other leading newspapers in English, Chinese, and other languages.

The tales of atrocities committed at Limbdi stirred the Chinese into anxious enquiries, and, readily, a deep sense of sympathy and solidarity spread throughout the length and breath of that brave and patriotic country. Amidst the troubling news of war at home and abroad, this Indian tale roused a tremendous commotion. Not a soul was there who would dare touch a single bale of Limbdi Cotton.

## CAMPAIGN OVER THE RADIO

And then, to strengthen the campaign, the services of the Shanghai Radio Station were also placed at the disposal of our Committee.

For five consequtive days in the first week of November last, stories of Limbdi atrocities were brodcasted in the Chinese language, and a strong boycott of Limbdi Cotton was urged. The first of these talks was given by Mr. Amritlal Sheth, in English, on the 1st of November.

As a result of this campaign the bales which were shipped to Shanghai failed to arrive, as there was no customer to hand. They were diverted to Japan, where they met the same fate, as described above.

Returning home, we may recall the earlier phases of the boycott.

## GENESIS OF THE STRUGGLE

The public are well aware, we believe, that the programme of the boycott of Limbdi Cotton was launched upon soon after the terrible days of February of this year when organised lootings were arranged in the villages on a big scale. The 19th of February—when the 'goondas' broke up the Conference, and wounded about 800 people in half an hour and started the rule of lawlessness—may well mark the turning-point in the history of Limbdi, or, for the matter of that, in the history of Kathiawar. For, from that day, a new and a disastrous element—of 'goondaism'—entered into the body-politic of Kathiawar, and with it, also, started this exemplary struggle—of wholesale emigration and boycott.

Thousands of villagers and merchants from the city migrated *en masse* from the state, and the *Prajamandal*, besides dealing with these migrants, made the boycott of Cotton the main plank of the struggle, with a view to paralyse the economic structure of the State, because the main income of the State is derived from Cotton.

The boycott strengthened day by day, and bright successes were registered. The State tried to sell the bales at near-by places like Baroda and Indore, but failed miserably. It sounded various other places, but nowhere could be found a single customer.

## MEMBERS OF BOYCOTT COMMITTEE

By this time, the task of the successful execution of this programme had been taken over by the "Kathiawar Praja Mandal" which set up in

August a strong and influential Committee consisting of such members as: Sjt. Bhavanji Arjun Khimji (President, The Bombay Cotton Merchants & Mukadam Association Ltd.), Sjt. Umadat Shivnarain Nemani (Director, The East Indian Cotton Association Ltd.), Sjt. Purshottamdas Harkisondas (Vice President, The Bombay Cotton Merchants and Mukadam Association Ltd.), Sjt. Ratilal Thakker (Director, The East India Cotton Association Ltd.), Sjt. Nemidas Tarachand (Director E. I. C. A. Ltd.), Sjt. Durlabhji Umedchand Parikh (President, The Kathiawar Praja Mandal, Treasurer, All India States' People's Conference), Samaldas Gandhi (Editor, Janmabhoomi), Hiralal Dave (Secretary, The Bombay Cotton Brokers' Staff Union).

This Committee, since its inception, has kept a vigilant watchfulness over the movement of the hated bales and their masters.

## THE MADRAS BAN

When, after failing to dump the bales at near-by places, the State-agents secretly moved into Madras, the Committee at once sent a strong deputation to the South. It visited Madras, Madura, Coimbatore, Trichi, Calicut, Cochin, Mysore, Bangalore and other places, and successfully hounded out the bales, before they could be smuggled in. Everywhere the deputation was accorded on enthusiastic support and almost all contracts were cancelled. After Madras, the consignment was shipped to China and Japan, in the hope that no 'hound' would catch it up in such remote parts. But we now know how China and Japan 'welcomed' them!

## THE BOMBAY 'INCIDENT'

We may also add the Bombay 'incident' wherein a prominent English firm had bought up a large consignment through mistake but, at the persuation by the Bombay Committee, finally concelled the contract.

Such is, in short, the history of this struggle—a struggle based on one single programme, planned and carried out successfully. Perhaps, in no other part of India such a programme of struggle has been thrashed out to its triumphant end. The Boycott of Limbdi Cotton will, indeed, form a land-mark in the history of India's struggle for freedom, showing how the determined will of a people, and the solidarity of its sympathisers, could triumph.

We need hardly remind the public of the gruesome, brutal and inhuman atrocities which the State of Limbdi has perpetrated on its innocent subjects. They are too fresh and too glaring and have already been made public in that ably-written pamphlet—*Lawless Limbdi*—(Published by All India States' People's Conference, 138, Medows Street, Fort, Bombay). They constitute a horrible blot on humanity and civilization which must be effaced. Let us all join in that great task by making a complete success of this Boycott.

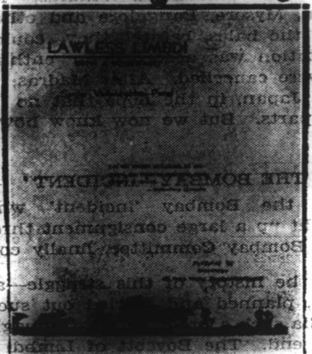
## WE APPEAL

The Boycott Committee feels proud of the success, and expresses its heart-felt gratitude to all those who have stood by it so far. But let us remind them all that the struggle is, as yet, only half-won. Still greater vigilance and solidarity are required. The new season is fast approaching. Our struggle will end only when the State comes to its senses and compensates for all the atrocities which it has perpetrated on its innocent subjects. Therefore let us be on our guard and vigilant. Onward with the Boycott of Limbdi Cotton!

**LIMBDI COTTON BOYCOTT COMMITTEE,**
**BOMBAY.**


**Book your order with:**

**The STATES PEOPLE CONFERENCE,**
**138 Medows Street,**
**Fort, Bombay.**



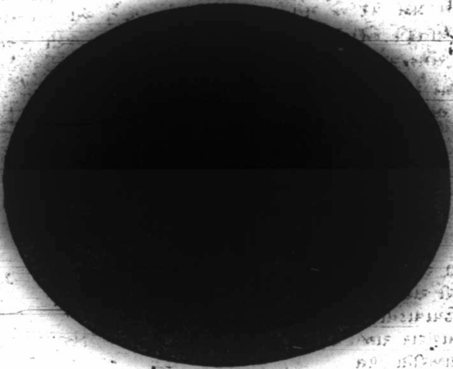

**Foreword by:—**
**Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**

**Price Rs. 2/-.**


Printed at States' People Press, 138 Medows Street, Fort, Bombay and Published by Limbdi Cotton Boycott Committee, Bombay.

# દેશીરાજ્યોની લડત

[ સરદાર વલ્લભભાઈનાં પ્રાસંગિક ભાષણો ]



"દેશીરાજ્યોની પ્રજાની મુક્તિ તેમના પોતાના જ પુરુષાર્થ ઉપર રહેલી છે."

—ગાંધીજી

૬ ૧

## પ્રકાશકનું નિવેદન

રાજકોટમાં ચાલી રહેલી પ્રજાકીય લડતને આજકાલ કરતાં મહિનાઓ થયા. એ લડતનો સળંગ ચિતાર અને એના મુદ્દાઓનો ખ્યાલ આવે એ ઇરાદે સરદારશ્રી વલ્લભભાઈનાં આ વ્યાખ્યાનો એક પત્રિકારૂપે બહાર પાડયાં છે. તેની સાથે પૂ. ગાંધીજીએ કાલના 'હરિજનબંધુ'માં આપણાં દેશીરાજ્યોને અંગેના વિશાળ પ્રશ્ન પર જે મનનીય લેખ લખેલો છે તે આ વ્યાખ્યાનોના ઉપોદ્‌ઘાતરૂપે જોડ્યો છે. વાચકોને આ પત્રિકાથી દેશી રાજ્યોની લડત સમજવામાં કાંઇક મદદ થશે એવી આશા છે.

રાજકોટ રાજ્ય પ્રજાપરિષદ કાર્યાલય
રાજકોટ, તા. ૫-૧૨-'૩૮

## અનુક્રમણિકા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એક આનો

વલ્લભભાઈ પટેલ

# દેશી રાજ્યો ને પ્રજા

પ્રજાના મુક્તિસંગ્રામમાં જુદાં જુદાં દેશી રાજ્યોની એક સામટી જાગૃતિ એ એક મહત્ત્વની બીના છે. કોઈ એક વ્યક્તિ કે મંડળ અથવા સંસ્થાની ઉશ્કેરણીથી આવડી જાગૃતિ થાય એમ માનવું પણ ભૂલભરેલું છે. સંભવ છે કે હરિપુરાની મહાસભાના ઠરાવે દેશી રાજ્યોની પ્રજાને કસોટીની સરાણ પર મૂકી દીધી અને અગાઉ કદી ન થયેલું તેટલું ભાન તેમને થયું કે તેમની મુક્તિ તેમના પોતાના જ પુરુષાર્થ ઉપર રહેલી છે. પણ સૌથી વધુ તો કાળગતિએ કરીને જ આ જાગૃતિ રજવાડી પ્રજાઓમાં આવી એમ કહેવાય. આ કાળગતિને રાજાઓ અને તેમના સલાહકારો ઓળખશે અને પ્રજાઓની ન્યાય્ય આકાંક્ષાઓ પૂરી કરશે એવી આપણે આશા રાખીએ. કાં તો દેશી રાજ્યો સાવ નાશ પામે અથવા તો રાજાઓ પોતાની પ્રજાઓને રાજ્યતંત્રને સારુ જવાબદાર બનાવીને પોતે પ્રજાના ટ્રસ્ટીઓ બને અને તેની રૂએ કામ બજાવીને મહેનતાણાની કમાઈ લે. આ બે સ્થિતિ સિવાય વચલો માર્ગ નથી.

તેથી હું આશા રાખું છું કે પોતાની પ્રજાઓને જવાબદાર રાજ્યતંત્ર આપવાની રાજાઓની શક્તિની બાબતમાં અર્લ વિન્ટરટને તાજેતરમાં જાહેર કરેલી નીતિમાં બ્રિટિશ સરકાર રાજાઓની અગર તો તેમના દીવાનોની માગણીથી ફેરફાર કરવાની છે એવી ઊડેલી અફવા સાચી નહીં હોય. જો કોઈએ સાચે જ એવા ફેરફારની માગણી બ્રિટિશ સરકાર પાસે કરી હોય તો તેમણે પોતાનું અહિત જ કર્યું છે, અને જો કદી બ્રિટિશ સરકાર એમનું મન રાખવા એવી કશી પેરવી કરશે તો તેમાંથી મહાકઠણ પ્રસંગ ઊભો થશે જેની વ્યાપ્તિ વિષે અટકળ કરવી મુશ્કેલ છે. બ્રિટિશ સરકાર એવી ભયાનક ભૂલ કરે એમ માનવાની મારે

ના જ પાડવી જોઈએ. અર્લ વિન્ટરટનની ઘોષણા ચાલતી આવેલી પ્રથાનો અનુવાદ માત્ર છે. પોતાની પ્રજાને અધિકાર— પછી તે ગમે તેટલા મોટા હો—આપવાની તજવીજમાં સરકારે કોઈ દેશી રાજ્યની બાબતમાં દખલગીરી કરી હોય એવું જાણમાં નથી.

હું એથીયે એક પગલું આગળ વધીને કહું છું કે સાર્વભૌમ સત્તા તરીકે જેમ બ્રિટિશ સત્તા રાજાઓને બહારના કે ઘરના સંકટ સામે રક્ષણ આપવાને બંધાયેલ છે તેમ એ જ ન્યાયે બલ્કે એથીયે વધુ રાજાઓ પણ ન્યાયથી રાજ કરે એવી ખોળાધરી લોકોને આપવાને બંધાયેલ છે. તેથી જ્યારે કોઈ પણ દેશી રાજ્યને તેઓ પોલીસ કે લશ્કરની મદદ આપે ત્યારે તેવી મદદની માગણીને માટે યોગ્ય સંકટ ઊભું થયું છે અને તેને પહોંચી વળવામાં સદરહુ મદદનો ઉપયોગ પૂરતા અંકુશપૂર્વક કરવામાં આવશે એ જોવાની પણ તેમની તેટલી જ ફરજ છે. ધેનકનાલમાં સાર્વભૌમ સત્તાએ મોકલેલ પોલીસની છાયા હેઠળ રાજના ભાડૂતી મવાલીઓએ કરેલા રાક્ષસી અત્યાચારોની હકીકતો મારી પાસે આવી છે. કેટલાક અકથ્ય અત્યાચારોની બાબતમાં મેં પુરાવો માગ્યો છે અને તે માનવા પડે એટલા પ્રમાણમાં મળ્યો પણ છે.

સવાલ તો એ છે કે જવાબદાર તંત્રોવાળા પ્રાંતોના પ્રધાનોની પોતપોતાના પ્રાંતોમાં આવેલાં દેશી રાજ્યોની પ્રજા પરત્વે કશી નૈતિક જવાબદારી આમાં ઊભી થાય છે કે નહિ? નવી રાજ્યઘટના હેઠળ પ્રધાનોની તેમના ઉપર કશી જ સત્તા માનેલી નથી. ગવર્નર વાઇસરૉયનો અને વાઇસરૉય સાર્વભૌમ સત્તાનો પ્રતિનિધિ છે, અને છતાં સ્વાયત્ત પ્રાંતોના પ્રધાનોની તેમના પ્રાંતમાં આવેલાં દેશી રાજ્યોમાં જે કંઈ બને તે પરત્વે કશીયે નૈતિક જવાબદારી પણ નથી એમ કેમ કહી શકાય? જ્યાં સુધી રજવાડા અને તેમની પ્રજા સુખસંતોષથી રહેતાં હોય ત્યાં સુધી પ્રધાનોને કશી ફિકર કરવાપણું નથી. પણ ધારો કે તેમના પ્રાંતમાં આવેલાં દેશી રાજ્યોમાં એકાદ ભયાનક રોગચાળો ફાટી નીકળે અને જેના પ્રત્યે દુર્લક્ષ કરવામાં આવે તો જે પ્રાંતોમાં સદરહુ રાજ્યો આવેલાં છે તે પ્રાંતમાં પણ ફેલાઈ જાય એવી ધાસ્તી હોય તો તેવી સ્થિતિમાં પણ શું પ્રાંતના પ્રધાનોની કશી જવાબદારી નથી ઊભી થતી?

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ઘેનકનાલમાં જો નૈતિક દષ્ટિએ ભયાનક રોગચાળો ફાટી નીકળેલો દેખાતો હોય તો એ સ્થિતિમાં ઉત્કલના પ્રધાનમંડળ પર કશી નૈતિક ફરજ નથી આવી પડતી?

મને મળેલી ખબર મુજબ ત્રાસના ભોગ થયેલા વિપદ્ગ્રસ્ત લોકો બ્રિટિશ ઉત્કલની હદમાં આશરો લઈ રહ્યા છે. પ્રધાનોએ તેમને આશરો આપવા શું ના પાડવી? જો રક્ષણ આપવું તો કેટલાને? આપી શકે પણ કેટલાને? દેશી રાજ્યોમાં જે કંઈ સારું માઠું બને તેનાં પરિણામ આખા પ્રાંતને અસર કરવાનાં જ. તેથી મને તો લાગે છે કે પ્રધાનો પર પડેલી મોટી જવાબદારી જોતાં તેમને કડક મર્યાદાઓ જાળવીને પ્રાંતમાંની સુલેહ અને આબરૂને ખાતર પણ વચ્ચે પડવાનો નૈતિક અધિકાર છે જ. સાર્વભૌમ સત્તાએ મનસ્વીપણે બનાવેલાં આ દેશી રાજ્યોની પ્રજાને ઘેનકનાલમાં ચાલી રહ્યું છે તેમ પીસી કાઢવામાં આવતી હોય તેવે વખતે પણ પોતાને કશી નિસ્બત ન હોય તેમ તેમનાથી ચૂપ બેસી રહેવાય નહિ.

છાપાંમાં જોઉં છું કે ઘેનકનાલની રૈયતને કંઈક છૂટો અપાઈ છે. છાપાંની બાતમી સાચી છે કે કેમ અગર તો જે રાહત આપવામાં આવી છે તે જેને સારુ લોકો લડી રહ્યા છે અને આવડી જહેમતો ઉઠાવી રહ્યા છે તે તેમની હાજતોને પહોંચી વળે છે કે કેમ એ હું નથી જાણતો. મેં ઉઠાવેલા સવાલને અંગે એ વિગત અપ્રસ્તુત છે. મને તો લાગે છે કે પ્રાંતિક સ્વાયત્તતા ભોગવનારા પ્રધાનો પોતાની હદમાં આવેલાં દેશી રાજ્યોમાં ભયાનક અંધેર ચાલતું હોય તો નૈતિક દૃષ્ટિએ તે તરફ લક્ષ આપવા અને એ સ્થિતિ અટકાવવા સારુ એમના અભિપ્રાય પ્રમાણે શું કરવું જોઈએ એ બાબતમાં સાર્વભૌમ સત્તાને સલાહ આપવાને બંધાયેલા છે, અને સાર્વભૌમ સત્તા પણ જો તેને પ્રાંતિક પ્રધાનો જોડે મૈત્રીનો સંબંધ રાખવો હોય તો તેમની સલાહને સહાનુભૂતિપૂર્વક સાંભળવાને બંધાયેલ છે.

બીજી એક બાબત તરફ પણ દેશી રાજ્યો અને તેમના સલાહકારો સત્વર ધ્યાન આપે એ અગત્યનું છે. તેઓ મહાસભાના નામથી ભડકે છે. મહાસભાવાદીને તેઓ બહારના, પારકા, ૪૦ ગણે છે. કાયદાની દૃષ્ટિમાં તેઓ ભલે તેવાં ગણી

ચકાતા હોય, પણ માણસકૃત કાયદો જ્યારે કુદરતી કાયદાનો વિરોધી બને છે અને એ કુદરતી કાયદો જ્યારે પોતાની પૂરી અસર પાડવા લાગે છે ત્યારે મૃત થઈ પડે છે. દેશી રાજ્યોની પ્રજા તેમનાં હિતોની બધી બાબતોમાં મહાસભા સામું જુએ છે. તેમનામાંના ઘણા મહાસભાના સભ્યો છે. શ્રી. જમનાલાલજી જેવા મહાસભાના તંત્રમાં મોટા હોદ્દાધારી પણ છે. મહાસભાની નજરમાં દેશી રાજ્યોના કે બ્રિટિશ કહેવાતા મુલકના સભ્યો વચ્ચે કશો જ ભેદ નથી. આ સ્થિતિમાં જ્યારે મહાસભા કે મહાસભાવાદીઓ ખાસ કરીને જ્યારે તે પોતે થઈને મિત્રદાવે મદદ કરવા તૈયાર હોય ત્યારે તેમની અવગણના કરવી એ ખચિત રાજ્યોના હિતને ધક્કો પહોંચાડનારું છે. તેમણે સમજવું જોઈએ કે તેમની પ્રજા તો ઘણેભાગે મહાસભાની જ સલાહથી વર્તનારી છે. તેમને એ બીનાની પણ ખબર હોવી જોઈએ કે આજ દિવસ સુધી મહાસભા જે બિન-દખલગીરીની નીતિ પાળતી આવી તેને સારુ હું જવાબદાર રહ્યો છું. પણ મહાસભાની વધતી જતી અસર અને પ્રભાવ જોતાં અને દેશી રાજ્યોમાં ચાલતા જુલમો જોતાં એ નીતિનો બચાવ કર્યે જવો મારે સારુ અસંભવિત છે. જો મહાસભાને લાગે કે અસરકારક રીતે વચ્ચે પડવાની તેનામાં તાકાત છે તો એવો પ્રસંગ આવ્યે અને સાદ પડયે તેવી રીતે વચ્ચે પડવાનો તેનો ધર્મ છે. અને રાજાઓ જો માનતા હોય કે પ્રજાનું ભલું એ તેમનું પણ ભલું જ છે તો તેમણે કૃતજ્ઞતાપૂર્વક મહાસભાની મદદ માગવી અને લેવી જોઈએ. તેમને દેખાવું જોઈએ કે બહુ દૂરના નહિ એવા ભવિષ્યમાં જે સંસ્થા તેમની સાર્વભૌમ સંસ્થાની જગા — મારી આશા મુજબ તો મિત્રાચારી-ભરી પતાવટથી — લેશે એવો રંગ દેખાય છે તેમની જોડે મિત્રાચારીનો સંબંધ કેળવવો એ ખચિત તેમના હિતની જ વાત છે. નગારાં વાગી રહ્યાં છે. તેઓ નહિ સાંભળે !

સેગાંવ, ૨૮–૧૧–'૩૮

('હરિજનબંધુ' માંથી)

**મોહનદાસ કરમચંદ ગાંધી**

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# મારી સલાહ ને માગણી

[રાજકોટ મુકામે ભરાયેલી રાજકોટ રાજ્ય પ્રજા પરિષદના પ્રથમ અધિવેશન આગળ સરદારશ્રીએ કરેલું પ્રવચન. તા. ૮–૯–'૩૮ના 'ગુજરાત સમાચાર' માંથી.]

ભાઈઓ અને બહેનો! ઘણાં કામ મૂકીને રખડતો રખડતો હવામાં ઊડીને પણ હું તમારી પાસે આવી પહોંચ્યો છું. તમારું આકર્ષણ કેટલું છે એ હું સમજ્યો છું. અને જે ભાવથી તમે મારું સ્વાગત કર્યું છે એ માટે હું તમારો આભાર માનું છું. કરાંચીથી હવામાર્ગે જલદી વર્ધા પહોંચી, કાલે રાત્રે વર્ધાથી નીકળી આજે હું તમારી પાસે આવ્યો છું. મને લાગ્યું કે કોઈ પણ ભોગે મારે આવવું જ જોઈએ; એટલે જ બે દિવસ પરિષદ લાચારીથી મુલતવી રાખવી પડી. પણ બે દિવસ તો ઘણા કહેવાય. એવાં કારણો મારી સામે આવીને ખડાં થયાં કે હું લાચાર બન્યો.

થોડા મહિનાઓ પહેલાં આપણે અહીં જ રાજકીય પરિષદ ભરી હતી. તે વખતે દરબાર સાહેબ પ્રમુખ હતા. તેઓ પોતે તો એ જાતનો બોજો ઉઠાવવા તૈયાર ન હતા; પણ મેં એમને એમની સાથે રહેવાનું વચન આપ્યું હતું. તેઓ જ્યાં સુધી પ્રમુખપદે રહે ત્યાં સુધી મેં અને ગાંધીજીએ એમને સાથ આપવાનું વચન આપ્યું છે. જે શહેરમાં પરિષદ હતી ત્યાં આજે આટલી બધી લોકજાગૃતિ થઈ ગઈ છે, ત્યારે મને બહાર રહેવું ગમે નહિ. તમારા શહેરમાં જે બનાવ બન્યો તે માનવા જ પ્રથમ તો હું તૈયાર ન હતો. રાજકોટમાં લાઠીચાર્જ થાય એ વાત જ મને તો સાચી લાગતી ન હતી. પણ દુઃખ સાથે મેં જાણ્યું કે એ તમામ હકીકતો સાચી હતી.

તે દિવસે મુંબઈમાં જાહેર સભા થઈ, એમાં હું ગયો હતો. અમસ્તો તો હું એવી સભાઓમાં જતો નથી, પણ જ્યારે શ્રી. ઢેબર ઉપર જાણેઅજાણે મર્મપ્રહાર થયાના સમાચાર મેં સાંભળ્યા અને તેમને જેલમાં પૂરવાની હકીકત મેં સાંભળી ત્યારે મારાથી રહેવાયું નહિ.

પણ તમે જાણો છો કે, હરિપુરા મહાસભાએ દેશી રાજ્યોને પોતાના પગ ઉપર ઊભા રહેવાનો આદેશ આપ્યો છે. એ પગભર થતાં શીખવાનો સિદ્ધાંત જગજાહેર છે. જેમ પાડોશી મરે અને આપણે સ્વર્ગમાં ન જઈ શકીએ એવું જ સ્વતંત્રતાનું છે. સ્વતંત્રતા જો આપણે જોઈતી હોય તો આપણે આપણા પગ ઉપર ઊભા રહેવું જોઈએ.

એવડી ગુલામી હંમેશાં કાંઈ ટકી રહેવાની નથી. એક કાળ એવો પણ હતો કે આપણી માગણીઓ હળવી હતી. આજે આપણી તાકાત બઢી ચૂકી છે. એ જ જીભ આજે બદલાઈ ગઈ છે અને હવે માગણીઓનું નાટક નહિ, પણ નક્કર માગણીઓ આપણે કરી રહ્યા છીએ. આજે અહીં મળેલી સભા છાપાના રિપોર્ટ પૂરતી જાહેર સભા નથી. એવી સભામાં હું જતો પણ નથી. આજની સભા તો તમારે જવાબદાર રાજતંત્ર જોઈએ છીએ એટલા માટેની છે. તમે આ સભામાં આટલા આકર્ષાયા છો એ ઉપરથી જ તમારી તમન્નાનો પુરાવો તમે આપી રહ્યા છો. જવાબદાર રાજતંત્રનો સિદ્ધાંત મહાસભાએ પણ આગળ રાખ્યો છે, અને બ્રિટિશ હિંદમાં એ થોડેઘણે અંશે સ્વીકારાયો છે.

આખા હિંદમાં આજે ચેતન પ્રગટી રહ્યું છે. એ ચેતનની ઝાળ તમને પણ લાગી છે અને લાગવી જ જોઈએ. જે રીતે બ્રિટિશ હિંદમાં એ હથિયારનો ઉપયોગ થઈ રહ્યો છે, તેમ તમે પણ તમારી સ્થિતિ સમજી લો અને એ હથિયારનો ઉપયોગ કરો.

રાજા ગમે તેવો હોય પણ તેને પદભ્રષ્ટ કરવા આપણે બેઠા નથી. એને પદભ્રષ્ટ કરવાનો આપણે વિચાર પણ કરતા નથી. આપણે જે માગીએ છીએ તે તો સત્તાની મર્યાદા માગીએ છીએ. ભવાઈની પાછળ, ગાનારીઓનાં નખરાં પાછળ અને વેશ્યાઓ નચાવવા પાછળ રાજા જો લખલૂટ ખર્ચ કરે, અને ખેડૂતો ભૂખે મરે તો તેવું રાજ્ય જીવે નહિ. એટલે એવી માગણી પ્રજા કરે તો નવાઈ નહિ.

રાજાના એ બધા દહાડા જતા રહ્યા. દેશીરાજ્યોમાં બધે જાગૃતિ ફેલાઈ રહી છે. મહાસભાએ પગ ઉપર ઊભા રહેવાનું કહ્યું એટલે બધેય પ્રવૃત્તિ ચાલી છે. તમે કોઈના ઉપર આધાર ન રાખશો.

કૉંગ્રેસ તો એ શસ્ત્ર ક્યાં ઉગામવું એનો જ વિચાર કરે છે. રાજ્ય નાનું હોય કે મોટું હોય ત્યાં મહાસભાના આગેવાનો પહોંચી જાય છે અને પ્રજાને, રાજ્યને અને સાર્વભૌમ સત્તાને– તમામને ઘટતી સલાહ આપે છે.

પણ એનો અર્થ એમ નથી કે પ્રજાની તૈયારી નથી. પ્રજાને ભાવ નથી, ભૂખ નથી, કે દુઃખ નથી; માગણીઓ તો બહારના ચળવળિયાઓ કરે છે, એવી ગાંડી ટીકાને તમે અવકાશ ન આપજો.

[ત્યાર બાદ સરદારશ્રીએ રાજ્યના સંબંધીઓ તરફથી પ્રજાને નામે પોતાના ઉપર મુકાયેલા તારોનો ઉલ્લેખ કર્યો હતો અને જણાવ્યું હતું કે પહેલા બે તારથી પોતે જરાયે વિચારમાં નહોતા પડ્યા. ગામડાંના ખેડૂતોને નામે થયેલા ત્રીજા તારનો ઉલ્લેખ કરતાં તેમણે જણાવ્યું હતું કે,]

આવી જાતનો તાર તો મારી જિંદગીમાં મને કદી જ મળ્યો નથી. તાર જોઈને મને આશ્ચર્ય થયું, અને મને થયું કે સુખી ખેડૂતોનાં દર્શન કરવાં જ જોઈએ, કેમ કે હિંદભરમાં ક્યાંય ખેડૂત સુખી નથી. ખેડૂતોની સ્થિતિ હું જાણું છું, કારણ કે ખેડૂત તો હુંય છું. સાચે જ દેશીરાજ્યના ખેડૂતો ભારે ભોળા હોય છે. કેટલાક તો રાજાઓને ઈશ્વરનો અવતાર માને છે. ત્યારે પ્રશ્ન એ થાય છે કે રાજા પાપી કે ઈશ્વર પાપી? ખરું જોતાં તો રાજા ટ્રસ્ટી છે. બાપદાદાનો હક એ ભોગવે છે. એટલે જ્યારે રાજા નાલાયક થાય ત્યારે તેને પદભ્રષ્ટ કરવાનો પ્રજાને દરેક દેશમાં હક હોય છે. પણ આપણા દેશમાં જ આપણા બાપદાદાઓએ આપણને કંઈક બહુ વફાદાર બનાવ્યા. એટલે આપણે હજી પિસાઈ રહ્યા છીએ.

રાજાઓ પાસે તો વગર મહેનતની દોલત પડી છે. એટલે એ વહેલો બગડે. એવો માણસ તો દયાને પાત્ર છે. આ દુનિયામાં સત્તાની પાછળ પડેલો મોટામાં મોટો રોગ કોઈ હોય તો તે ખુશામત છે. રાજાઓને મીઠી વાતો સાંભળવી છે, પણ એ તો રાજદ્રોહ છે. અને કડવી છતાં સાચી વાતો એ જ વફાદારી છે. પણ આજે તો ઊલટું જ બની રહ્યું છે. એટલે 'વફાદારો' તરફથી મને મળેલા તારો ઉપરથી હું બેસી રહું તો મેં પ્રજાનો દ્રોહ કર્યો ગણાય. કેમ કે પ્રજાનો મોટો ભાગ એમ ઇચ્છતો ન હતો. હું જો ન આવ્યો હોત તો તમે નિરાશ થાત અને તમને દુઃખ પણ

થાત. અહીંયાં આવીને મેં તમારો ઉત્સાહ જોયો છે અને આજે તમે જે મત આપો છો તેથી જ હું સમજી ગયો છું.

એક ભાઈએ એવો મત આપ્યો કે બધા લાઠી ખાવા તૈયાર છે, ત્યારે મેં એમને જવાબ આપ્યો કે, 'હું ગાંડો નથી, કે તમે કહો છો એ હું માની લઉં. બધા જ જો લાઠી ખાવા તૈયાર હોત તો વાર ક્યાં હતી!' હું સમજું છું કે આપણે બધા જ એવા તૈયાર નથી. અને બધા તૈયાર હોય પણ નહિ. લોકજાગૃતિ થોડા માણસોના ભારે ભોગથી થાય છે. એવા ભારે ભોગ આપનારાઓનો મનાઈહુકમ જો મને મળશે તો હું પાછો નહિ આવું.

હું તો અહીંયાં એ તપાસ કરવા આવ્યો છું કે પ્રજા ખરેખર શું ઇચ્છે છે? મેં જોયું છે કે પ્રજા રાજતંત્રમાં પલટો ઇચ્છે છે. તંત્રમાં જવાબદારી સંભાળવા જેટલી પ્રજા લાયક નથી, એમ કોણ કહે છે? જે કહેતો હોય તેણે દિલને પૂછવું જોઈએ કે આપણી પોતાની લાયકાત કેટલી છે? પહેલાં બ્રિટિશ હિંદમાં પણ એમ કહેવાતું. પણ પ્રજાએ માથાં ફોડાવ્યાં, અને આજે માથાં ફોડાવનારાઓ જ પ્રધાનો થઈ આવ્યા છે.

[ત્યાર બાદ સરદારશ્રીએ બ્રિટિશ હિંદના પ્રાંતોમાં નવું બંધારણ દાખલ થયાની અને મધ્યસ્થ બંધારણ પણ દાખલ કરવાની ચાલી રહેલી વ્યવસ્થા વિષે વિવેચન કર્યું હતું. અને સમવાયતંત્રનો મુખ્ય પ્રશ્ન રાજાઓને નાથવા કઈ રીતે, એ હોવાનું દલીલો સાથે સમજાવ્યું હતું. બ્રિટિશ હિંદમાં ચૂંટણીનું ધોરણ અને દેશીરાજ્યમાં નિમણૂકનું ધોરણ એ બે વસ્તુ સાથે બની શકે નહિ, તેથી દેશીરાજ્યોમાં પણ બ્રિટિશ હિંદ જેવી જ ચૂંટણીની વ્યવસ્થા થાય એવો આગ્રહ રાખવાનું જરૂરી જણાયાનું પણ તેમણે સમજાવ્યું. ત્યાર બાદ રાજકોટની પ્રજાને ઉદ્દેશીને તેમણે જણાવ્યું હતું કે] રાજકોટની પ્રજા એવી ઉમેદ ન રાખે કે કોંગ્રેસની સત્તાથી એમને સત્તા મળી જશે. એ માટે તો એમણે જ ભોગ આપવા તૈયાર થવું પડશે. તમારો જો નિશ્ચય હશે તો કોઈ તમારી પ્રગતિ રોકી નહિ શકે. બધા રાજાઓ ભેગા થાય તો પણ એ દહાડો નહિ આવે.

બીજાં રાજ્યો તમારાથી ખરાબ હોય તો તમારે ખરાબ રહેવું એવું કાંઈ નથી. તમારે જો સુધારવું હશે તો બધા રાજાઓ

કે બ્રિટિશ સત્તા પણ તમને દબાવી શકશે નહિ. કેમ કે આપણું નિશ્ચયબળ અને ભોગ આપવાની તૈયારી એ આપણાં હથિયાર છે. એ હથિયારો આપણને સૂઝયાં એ ઈશ્વરી સંકેત છે; કેમ કે સાચે-સાચાં હથિયારોથી જો આપણે લડત લડીએ તો તે હારી જ જવાના હતા. આઝાદ થવાનો સંકેત એણે આપ્યો. એટલે દુશ્મન પાસે પણ નહોતું એવું હથિયાર એણે આપણને સુઝાડયું. એ હથિયારનો ઉપયોગ જો બરાબર થાય તો ફક્ત પાંચ પચીસ માણસો રાજકોટને જવાબદાર રાજતંત્ર અપાવી શકે.

આપણે ધ્યેય માટે લડીએ છીએ, અને આપણું ધ્યેય શુદ્ધ હોય ત્યારે આપણી ત્રુટીઓ સુધારવાનો આપણે હંમેશાં પ્રયત્ન કરવો જોઈએ.

રાજ્યની સાથે લડવું ન પડે એવી રીતે કામ થતું હોય તો લડવું નહિ. જો સ્વમાન સાચવીને માગ્યું મળતું હોય તો તે મેળવવામાં હરકત નથી; હું તો પગે પણ પડું. કોઈ કારભારી સામે આપણે વાંધો નથી. આપણે હિન્દીને કાઢીને અંગ્રેજને લાવવો પણ નથી. અંગ્રેજને લાવવાનો મને શોખ નથી. કેમ કે જાણીબૂઝીને અંગ્રેજ નોતરવો એ આપઘાત જ છે. કોઈ વ્યક્તિ સામે આપણી વેરવૃત્તિ નથી. આપણી તકરાર સંસ્થા સામે છે, પ્રથા સામે છે. એનો નાશ થાય એ આપણી માગણી છે. આપણે એકહથ્થુ સત્તા ધરાવતા રાજાને એની મર્યાદા બતાવવી જોઈએ. ઠાકર અને ઠાકોર બન્ને એક જ છે. એ જ્યાં સુધી મંદિર બહાર ન નીકળે ત્યાં સુધી પૂજા કરવા લાયક છે. પણ આ તો પ્રથા જ એવી છે કે, ગમે તેવી વ્યક્તિ પણ તેમાં આપોઆપ જ બગડી જાય.

આપણી લડતમાં આપણે ભૂલ ન ખાઈએ. રાજ્ય ન માને એ સંભવિત છે; કારણ એમનો ગર્વ ઝટ નહિ ઊતરે. આપણે રાજા છીએ, આપણને કહેનાર કોણ? એવો ખ્યાલ એમના મનમાંથી ઝટ નહિ નીકળે. અંગ્રેજ હોય તો રાજાને ઝટ કહી શકે, પણ પ્રજા ન કહી શકે, એવો ઘાટ છે. એના એ જ ગર્વિષ્ઠ રાજાઓ અંગ્રેજને દરવાજે ચપરાશીને પૈસા ચાંપીને પણ અંદર જાય, પણ ખેડૂતની ઝૂંપડીમાં તેમનાથી નહિ જવાય!!

રાજા જ જ્યારે એવા હોય ત્યારે લડવું પણ પડે. ફેંસલો થઈ જાય તો તો સદ્‌ભાગ્ય. પણ આ કંઈ મામૂલી વાત નથી. દીવાન કદાચ સારો આવે, પણ રાજા ન માને તો? હાથ ઝાલીને દસ્કત કરાવે એવો કોઈ દીવાન હોય? દીવાનોને આટલી સત્તા મેં ક્યાંય જાણી નથી. મને દીવાનોની કે ખટપટની બહુ સમજણ નથી પડતી. છતાં હું થોડા જ વખતમાં સમજી ગયો કે એ કોઈ જવાબદાર માણસ નથી. એનું દિલ સાબુત નથી. એનો ઇલાજ રેસિડન્ટ કરી શકે. એને એ સત્તા છે, અને એ ઉઠાડી પણ મૂકી શકે. જો આમ ને આમ ચાલ્યા કરે તો આખરે એ જ થાય, અથવા બહુ થાય તો કોઈ અંગ્રેજ આવે. પણ એમાં આપણું પાનિયું કંઈ ઊઘડે નહિ. માટે એનો ફેંસલો તો રાજકોટની પ્રજા જ કરી શકે. મારી તમને એવી સલાહ છે કે તમે લડો. જરૂર પડ્યે હું તમારી સાથે જ છું. હું તો લડાયક વૃત્તિનો છું. લડતનો મને શોખ છે.

એટલે આપણે એ રીતે તૈયાર થવું જોઈએ. પાણીમાં તરનારા ડૂબે છે ખરા અને કિનારે ઊભેલા ડૂબતા નથી એ સાચું; પણ એવાઓ તરતાં પણ નથી શીખતા. પ્રજા લડે અને હારે તેનું દુઃખ નથી. તમે જો જીતશો તો હું અને આખું હિંદ રાજી થઈશું; પણ જો બદનામી લેશો તો તેમાં તો તમને પોતાને જ નુકસાન છે.

આપણે આપણું હથિયાર વિચારી લેવું છે: વિચારી લીધું છે. ગાળો એ આપણું હથિયાર નથી. સંયમ સેવનારાઓ જ પ્રજાને જીત અપાવી શકે છે. તિરસ્કાર કરનારાઓ નહિ અપાવી શકે. આપણી આ પવિત્ર લડતમાં જે જે પડ્યા છે તેમાં જો હિંસા, વેરઝેર કે કાંઈ એવું જાગશે તો તે આપણું દુશ્મન થશે અને આપણી નામોશી કરશે. તમારા કારભારી ઉપર કે તમને લાઠી મારનાર પોલીસ ઉપર પણ વેર નહિ રાખશો. એમનો તો ઊલટો તમારે આભાર માનવો જોઈએ કે એમણે જ તમને વહેલા જાગૃત કર્યા. નહિ તો તમે ક્યારે જાગવાના હતા?

રાજ્યે પ્રજા પર લાઠીમાર ચલાવીને પોતાને હાથે દુઃખને નોતર્યું છે. પણ આપણી આ લડત તો એવી છે, કે એમાં બીજા કોઈને દુઃખી કર્યા સિવાય આપણે જેટલું વધારે દુઃખ વેઠીએ તેટલી આપણી સિદ્ધિ વહેલી છે. એટલે તમે કોઈ ઉપર

વેર નહિ રાખજો, કોઈ ઉપર રોષ ન કરશો. એના દિલમાંય પરિવર્તન જાગશે અને એ કોઈક દિવસ સુધરશે.

નાપાક તો કોણ કહેવાય કે જેને દેશનું દાઝે નહિ, સ્વતંત્રતા જોઈતી ન હોય. પણ પ્રજા મરદ બને તો એ બધું જતું રહેશે.

સ્વ. લાખાજીરાજ તો બહાદુર રાજા હતા. એમનું ઋણ રાજકોટની પ્રજા ઉપર તો ઘણુંય છે. એણે રાજા તરીકેનો પોતાનો ધર્મ પાળવા ઘણો પ્રયત્ન કર્યો હતો.

પણ હવેના રાજવીઓ એટલે તો રાજકુમાર કોલેજનો પાક! અને રાજકુમાર કોલેજનો પાક એટલે સડી ગયેલાં ફળ! એ કોલેજમાંથી ઓછા જ લાયક નીકળ્યા હશે. જાણે નાલાયક બનાવવા માટે ત્યાં મોકલાતા ન હોય! રાજકુમાર એટલે જાણે વિચાર કરવાની શક્તિ નહિ, આચારવિચારભ્રષ્ટ. પ્રજા તરફ ભાવથી, માનથી અને પ્રેમથી રાજવીઓ જુએ એ ભાવના જ હવે તો રહી નથી.

ઇંગ્લંડનો રાજા કહેવાય છે તો શહેનશાહ, પણ એ આખરે તો પ્રજાનો સેવક જ છે. પ્રજા જ ખરી એની ધણી છે. એટલે તો એડવર્ડ આઠમાને ગાદી ઉપરથી ઉઠાડી મૂક્યો. અને અહીં તો બહારથી નાચનારીઓ લાવીને નચાવે તોયે તમે કંઈ બોલી શકવાના નથી. પણ રાજાની નાલાયકી એ આપણી પોતાની નાલાયકી છે. એટલે પ્રજાએ તો રાજાના ચોકીદાર બનવું જોઈએ. આપણે ચોકી રાખીએ ત્યાં સુધી રાજા સારો રહે જ.

તમે જે મુખ્ય ઠરાવ જવાબદાર રાજતંત્રનો કર્યો છે તેમાં મને ગળા સુધી ખાતરી છે કે તમારો લડવાનો નિરધાર પૂરેપૂરો છે. પણ આ ઊભરો શમી ન જાય તે જોજો. કોઈ વચ્ચે નહિ પડે તો ફેંસલો ઝટ આવવાનો છે.

રાજાઓને તો ખાતરી છે કે એજન્સી આપણી પડખે છે જ. તેઓ એ જુએ છે કે કોંગ્રેસની શક્તિ ક્યાંય વધી ન જાય. વધી જાય એવું એમને થવા નથી દેવું. પણ આટલે વર્ષે જ્યારે એનામાં તાકાત આવી ગઈ છે ત્યારે એની ઈર્ષા કરવી કામની શી? મહાસભા કંઈ આંતરિક વ્યવસ્થામાં ડખલ કરવાની નથી. પણ રાજ્યની પ્રજા ફરિયાદ કરતી આવે ત્યારે અમારાથી "જાઓ તમારે ઘેર" એમ ન કહેવાય; પણ ગણતરી કરીને, સંયમ રાખવાનું કહીને કહેવાય કે લડો. અમે શું કરીએ, એમ અમારાથી ન કહેવાય.

પૃ. ૨૧



બંધારણીય રાજાશાહીની જેમ રાજા ગોઠવાય એ જ આપણે જોઈએ. પણ એમને જો આપખુદ રહેવાની જ ઇચ્છા હોય તો એમને વિલાયત મોકલવા જોઈએ અને ત્યાંની પ્રજામાં એ ચાલે છે કે કેમ તે જોવાનું કહેવું જોઈએ.

દુનિયા આખીમાં જવાબદાર રાજતંત્રો છે અને અહીં આપણી દશા કેવી છે? દેશીરાજ્યો તો પ્રજાશરીર ઉપર ગંડગૂમડની માફક પરુપાચ વહ્યા કરે તેવાં બની રહ્યાં છે. મહાસભાની માફક પોતાની નીતિ એમણે જાહેર કરી જ દેવી જોઈએ.

મહાસભાનું જોર વધે છે એમાં એ લોકો દાઝે બળે છે. પણ જોર તો વધવાનું જ છે. સૂર્યનું અજવાળું બધે ફેલાશે; કોઈ ભાગ અંધારે નહિ રહી શકે. મહાસભાના સિદ્ધાંતો આખા હિંદની પ્રજાના કલ્યાણની ખાતર છે. તેથી જ તે પોતા તરફ બધાનાં દિલનું આકર્ષણ કરે છે.

અહીં તો તમારી બધાની દશા ત્રિશંકુ જેવી છે. પણ હવે જ્યારે જાગૃતિ આવી ચૂકી છે ત્યારે તમારો છુટકારો નજીક છે. અને રાજકોટનું રાજ્ય કરવું એમાં છે પણ શું? એ તો નાનું સરખું રાજ્ય છે. એક નાની સરખી મ્યુનિસિપાલિટી જેટલો એનો વહીવટ છે. એમાં કરવા જેવું છે શું? અમદાવાદમાં પાંચ લાખની વસ્તી અને આમદાની અડધા કરોડ ઉપરની છે અને ત્યાંનો વહીવટ પ્રજા જ ચલાવે છે ને? વહીવટ ચલાવવામાં બુદ્ધિની જરૂર હશે તો વકીલો અને બીજા સલાહ આપનારા ક્યાં નથી મળતા?

તમે કાઠિયાવાડના માથાના મુગટ કહેવાઓ છો. પણ માથાના મુગટ — પાઘડીમાંથી દુર્ગંધ મારતી હોય તો તે ફેંકી દો. એવી ગંધાતી પાઘડી કરતાં ઉઘાડું માથું શું ખોટું? આપણે આપણા હકનું રક્ષણ કરવા તૈયાર થવું જોઈએ. અને ઉદ્દામવાદ અને મધ્યમવાદ એ વળી બધું શું? દેશી રાજ્યોમાં તો એક જ વાદ હોય — રાજ આપણા હાથમાં આવે. ત્યાર પછી વાદની વાતો કરીશું. અત્યારે તો એ વાદની વાતો બંને વાદની ઘાતક છે. સત્તા આવશે ત્યારે એનું વિચારીશું. રાજ્યખર્ચની બાબતમાં સાધનના પ્રમાણમાં ખર્ચ કરીશું. પ્રજાના પ્રતિનિધિઓ બજેટ કરે અને વહીવટ પણ આપણે પોતે જ કરવાના છીએ. એટલે સાથે મળીને જ કામ કરવું જોઈએ. પક્ષની જમાવટનો અત્યારે અવકાશ નથી.

રાજકોટની એક લાખની પ્રજાના પ્રતિનિધિની જવાબદારીઓ ભારે છે. હું કે બીજો કોઈ તમને પાણી ચઢાવવા નથી આવ્યા. એ તો ભાટચારણનું કામ છે. વખત આવ્યે તેની મેળે પરીક્ષા થવાની છે. દસ દિવસ પછી લડાઈમાં પરીક્ષા થઈ જવાની જ છે.

તમે રાજકોટની પ્રજા એકત્રિત અવાજે આ માગણી કરો છો એ યાદ રાખી, છેક સુધી શુદ્ધ લડત લડજો અને તમારાથી બને તેટલું કરી છૂટજો. બધાની આંખ તમારા ઉપર છે. અનેક દેશીરાજ્યો તમે શું કરો છો એ જોઈ રહ્યાં છે. એટલે તમે જે કરો તે આબરૂ વધે તેવું કરજો. તમે હારશો તો કાંઈ હરકત નથી. પણ નામોશી કોઈ જાતની આવે તેવું કામ કદી નહિ કરતા. મારી માગણી એટલી જ છે.

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## કાઠિયાવાડની કસોટી

[રાજકોટની પ્રજા પરિષદ થઈ ગયા પછી આરંભાયેલા દરબાર વીરાવાળાના જુલમોનો વિરોધ કરવા, તા. ૧૮–૮–'૩૮ના રોજ મુંબઈ ઝીણા હૉલમાં મળેલી સભાનાં પ્રમુખપદેથી સરદારે આપેલું વ્યાખ્યાન. તા. ૧૯–૮–'૩૮ના 'જન્મભૂમિ'માંથી]

ગઈ કાલનાં સાંજનાં વર્તમાનપત્રોમાંથી તમને ખબર તો પડી હશે કે રાજકોટમાં અણધાર્યા બનાવો બની રહ્યા છે. કાઠિયાવાડ રાજકીય પરીષદના મંત્રી ઢેબરભાઈ અને બીજા થોડા કાર્યકરોને કેદમાં પૂરી દેવામાં આવ્યા છે. આ બન્યું ત્યાર પહેલાં રાજકોટમાં ભરાયેલી એક જાહેર સભા ઉપર નિર્દય લાઠીમાર થયો હતો અને સંખ્યાબંધ માણસોને સખત માર પડયો હતો. આ બધા બનાવોની હકીકત તમે ગઈ કાલે જાણી હશે. મારા ઉપર આવી રહેલા સંખ્યાબંધ કાગળો પરથી ત્યાંની વસ્તુસ્થિતિનો ખ્યાલ આવે છે. એ બધા જુલમોનો વિરોધ કરવાને આ સભા બોલાવવામાં આવી છે. રાજકોટમાં આવા બનાવો બનશે એવી ધારણા હતી નહિ. પરંતુ આજે દુનિયામાં એવો સમય આવ્યો છે કે અણધાર્યા બનાવો જ બન્યે જાય છે. અને રાજકોટનો બનાવ પણ એવા અણધાર્યા બનાવમાંનો જ છે.

તમે બધાં શ્રી. ઉછરંગરાય ઢેબરને તો ઓળખતાં હશો. આખા કાઠિયાવાડના રાજકીય ક્ષેત્રમાં તેના જેવો સજ્જન બીજો

કોઈ નથી એમ કહીએ તો તે ખોટું નથી. એ અતિ સંયમશીલ પુરુષ છે. તેના મોઢામાંથી આકરા શબ્દ કદી નીકળતા નથી. પંદર પંદર વર્ષોથી ખોળંબે પડેલા કાઠિયાવાડ રાજકીય પરિષદના કાર્યને શ્રી. ઢેબરે વેગ આપ્યો. તેમના વિવેક અને વિનયભર્યા પ્રયત્નોને લઈને કાઠિયાવાડ રાજકીય પરિષદ રાજકોટમાં ભરવાની પરવાનગી મળી. તેમના જેવા પુરુષને લાઠીમાર પડે અને જેલમાં જવું પડે તે કલ્પનાની બહાર હતું. પણ રાજકોટની કેદમાં એ બત્રીશલક્ષણો પુરુષ પુરાઈ ગયો છે.

રાજકોટના હાલના 'દીવાન'ના પિતા રાજકોટના દીવાન હતા. તેમનું નામ દરબાર વીરાવાળા. દરબાર વીરાવાળાએ શું જોઈને તેમના પુત્રને દીવાનપદ સોંપ્યું છે તે સમજાતું નથી. રાજકોટમાં ગુજરી રહેલા જુલમો તેમના-દીવાન-પુત્રના કારભારામાં શક્ય બન્યા છે.

ગુજરાતની એક કહેવત છે કે, 'નર્મદાના જેટલા કંકર તે બધા જ શંકર.' તેવી જ રીતે હિંદુસ્તાનમાં રાજાઓ, રાજાઓના દીકરાઓ કે રાજાઓના ભત્રીજાઓ તે બધા જ રાજા. રાજાનો પુત્ર રાજા બને એ તો જગતભરનો ધારો છે. રાજાના પુત્રને રાજા બનવાનો વારસો મળે છે, પણ 'દીવાનનો દીકરો દીવાન' એ તો રાજકોટના કારભારનો નવો જ ધારો છે! દીવાનના દીકરાને દીવાનપદનો વારસો મળે તે તો તદ્દન નવી જ પ્રથા છે. દીવાનનો દીકરો લાયક હોય તો તો તે કંઈક અંશે સાંખી પણ શકાય. પરંતુ દીવાનપદ માટે લાયકી ધરાવતો ન હોય એવા દીવાનનો દીકરો દીવાનપદું ભોગવતો હોય તેનો પ્રજા વિરોધ કરે તે સ્વાભાવિક છે. એમ સાંભળવામાં આવ્યું છે કે દીવાનના દીકરાને રાજકોટના દીવાનપદે બેસાડવામાં આવ્યો ત્યારથી રાજકોટમાં ખળભળાટ થઈ રહ્યો છે.

શ્રી. ઉછરંગરાય ઢેબરે રાજકોટ વિષે 'જન્મભૂમિ'માં લખેલા પાંચ લેખો તમે વાંચ્યા હશે. આટલી બધી અશાંતિ થઈ જાય તેવું પણ એ લેખોમાં હોય તેમ મને લાગ્યું નથી. શ્રી. ઢેબરના એ લેખો મિત્રભાવે રાજ્યની કરેલી ટીકા જેવા મને જણાયા છે.

હિંદમાં દેશીરાજ્યો અસંખ્ય છે અને 'એ રાજ્યોમાં અંધાધૂંધી ચાલી રહી છે.' એ જ રીતે રાજકોટમાં ચાલતી અંધાધૂંધી ત્યાંની પ્રજા માટે અસહ્ય બની છે. રાજકોટમાં

લાખાજીરાજ નામવંતા મહારાજા થઈ ગયા. રાજકોટના હાલના રાજવીને તો શું કહીએ? દેવતાના દીકરા એ બધાય કોલસા! રાજકોટના સદ્દગત લાખાજીરાજ તો છડેચોક ગાંધીજીને બોલાવતા, તેમને પોતાના સિંહાસને બેસાડતા, અને તેમને માનપત્ર આપતા. મને પણ એક વખત ત્યાં લઈ ગયા હતા. યુવકોએ પંડિત જવાહરલાલને રાજકોટ બોલાવ્યા ત્યારે લાખાજીરાજે તેમનું સન્માન કર્યું હતું. બીજો કોઈ રાજા હોય તે તો જેલમાં પૂરે. ત્યારે તેમણે આવી વ્યક્તિઓને પોતાના મહેમાનો બનાવ્યા હતા. પરંતુ આજે તો રાજકોટમાં પ્રવર્તતી સ્થિતિ 'અંધેરી નગરી ને ગંડુ રાજા' જેવી છે. ને તેથી રાજકોટની પ્રજા ત્રાસી ગઈ છે.

સામાન્ય રીતે એવી આશા રાખી શકાય કે, કાયદાનો ભંગ કરવાને અથવા 'સિંહાસનેથી ઊતરી જાઓ' એવું કહેવાને પ્રજાજનો મળતાં હોય અને લાઠીમાર થયો હોય તો તે હજી કાંઈ સમજી શકાય. પરંતુ રાજકોટમાં ભરાયેલી સભાનો હેતુ માત્ર રાજ્યમાં જુગાર ન ચાલવો જોઈએ તેટલા પૂરતો હતો. અમુક તહેવારના દિવસોમાં જુગાર ન ચાલે તે માટે ઢેબરભાઈએ પ્રજા સમક્ષ પોકાર પાડ્યો હતો. એ સભામાં "રાજ્ય ન કરશો" એવો કોઈ ઠરાવ ન હતો. "પ્રજાને જવાબદાર તંત્ર સોંપી દો" તેવું પણ તેમાં કાંઈ ન હતું. એટલે જુગારની બદી બંધ કરાવવામાં પ્રજાજનોને લાઠીમાર ખાવો પડે તે એક આશ્ચર્ય છે.

આજે જગતમાં ક્રાંતિ થઈ રહી છે. રાજવીઓના કાનમાં પણ એ ક્રાંતિના ભણકારા વાગી રહ્યા છે. તેઓ જાણી ગયા છે કે હવે બધું જ જવા બેઠું છે. એટલે, બમે તેટલો આખરી જુલમ કરી લેવા તેઓ તૈયાર થયા લાગે છે. આવે વખતે રાજકોટમાં પ્રવર્તતી પરિસ્થિતિથી કોને દુઃખ નહિ થાય?

શ્રી. ઢેબર જેવા સજ્જનને લાઠીમાર ખમવો પડ્યો ત્યારે મને લાગ્યું કે રાજકોટની પ્રજામાં અદમ્ય જાગૃતી આવી છે— જવાબદાર રાજ્યતંત્ર ચલાવવાની રાજકોટની પ્રજાની લાયકાત અનેક ગણી વધી ગઈ છે. હરિપુરા મહાસભાનો ઠરાવ રાજસ્થાનીઓને એ જ કહે છે કે, જાગૃત થાઓ, તૈયાર થાઓ; માથાં ફોડાવો, કેદખાનાં ભરી નાંખો, તમારાં લોહી વહેવરાવો; તમારી પડખે આખું હિંદુસ્તાન છે. હરિપુરા મહાસભાના ઠરાવોનું

હાર્દ દેશીરાજ્યોની પ્રજા સમજી ગઈ છે. તેનાં દૃષ્ટાંતો અનેક રાજ્યોમાં હવે આપણે જોઈએ છીએ.

હરિપુરાની મહાસભાના ઠરાવોમાં સમવાયતંત્રનો વિરોધ છે. સુચવાયેલા સમવાયતંત્રનો હિંદુસ્તાન સ્વીકાર કરનાર નથી. કોઈ કાળે હિંદુસ્તાન સમવાયતંત્રનો સ્વીકાર કરશે તો તે સમવાયતંત્ર એવું હશે કે તેમાં રાજાઓના નીમેલા પ્રતિનિધિઓ નહિ હોય. મહાસભાના પ્રતિનિધિઓ રાજાઓના આવા પ્રતિનિધિઓની સાથે બેસનાર નથી. મહાસભાએ પોતાના ઠરાવો દ્વારા દેશી રાજ્યની પ્રજા પાસેથી મધ્યસ્થ સરકારમાં બેસવાની લાયકાત કેળવવાની માગણી કરી છે. દેશીરાજ્યોની પ્રજાની કેળવાતી જતી આ લાયકાત રાજાઓ અને મધ્યસ્થ સરકાર પણ જાણી ગઈ છે. ત્યારે રાજકોટમાં આ શું ચાલી રહ્યું છે?

રાજકોટની કસોટી કરનારા બનાવ બન્યા છે. ના, અત્યારે તો આખા કાઠિયાવાડની કસોટીનો સમય છે. કાઠિયાવાડે એવું કરવું જોઈએ કે ઢેબરભાઈ રાજકોટની જેલમાં રહી શકે નહિ અને તેમના જેવા પવિત્ર માણસને રાજકોટની જેલમાં પચાવવા તે કાચો પારો પચાવવા જેટલું કઠિન થઈ રહે. ઢેબરભાઈને જેલમાં પચાવી શકાય તો સમજવું કે કાઠિયાવાડ સ્વતંત્રતા માટે લાયક નથી થયું. કાઠિયાવાડની પ્રજાને તો આટલો જ સંદેશ આપી શકાય કે, અમે અને આખું હિંદુસ્તાન તમારી પડખે છીએ, પરંતુ તમે તમારું ખમીર બતાવી આપો. રાજકોટની અને આસપાસનાં ગામડાંઓની પ્રજાને જાગૃત કરી દો. તેને જણાવો કે અંધેરી નગરીને ગબરગંડુ રાજાના કારભાર ચાલી રહ્યા છે. રાજાઓને તો બાજુએ બેસાડીને, તેમને નજરાણું આપીને આપણે રાજ્ય કરવું જોઈએ. દીવાન નીમવાનો પ્રજાને અધિકાર છે. દીવાનનો દીકરો, મિત્ર કે સગો દીવાન થઈ શકે એ વસ્તુ હવે ચાલશે નહિ. પ્રજાનો શો ધર્મ છે તે સમજવાનો વખત આવ્યો છે. કાઠિયાવાડ તેનું પાણી બતાવશે તો આખું હિંદ તેની સાથે જ છે

મુંબઈવાસીઓને હું જણાવું છું કે રાજકોટના બત્રીશલક્ષણા માણસો જેલમાં પુરાયેલા છે તેના કરતાં વધારે સારો ભોગ લડત માટે બીજો કયો હોઈ શકે?

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એજન્સીની હદમાં સભા થઈ. લાઠીમાર પછી પોલીસ અમલદારે જાહેર કર્યું કે મારા માણસોની ભૂલ થઈ અને તે બદલ માફી માગી. આ પ્રમાણે કોઈના હુકમ વગર લાઠીમાર થાય તે તો ગુંડાગીરી કહેવાય, રાજ્યની અંદર અંધારું જ ગણાય. આવા ગુના ફરીથી ન બને તે માટે રાજ્યની પ્રજાએ "જવાબદાર રાજ્યતંત્ર નહિ મળે ત્યાં સુધી લડત નહિ અટકે" એમ રાજ્યને સ્પષ્ટ રીતે સુણાવી દેવું જોઈએ. અને મુંબઈમાં વસતા કાઠિયાવાડીઓએ વિચારવું જોઈએ કે અડધું ઘર કાઠિયાવાડમાં અને અડધું ઘર મુંબઈમાં તે ક્યાં સુધી ચાલવાનું છે? ખાનદાન માણસો આબરૂભરી રીતે કાઠિયાવાડમાં રહી શકે એવી સ્થિતિ આપણે પેદા કરવી જ જોઈએ. જે રાજકોટમાં કાઠિયાવાડ રાજકીય પરિષદ ભરાઈ હતી તે જ રાજકોટમાં પરિષદના મંત્રીને કેદ મળે ત્યારે તેને છોડાવવાને જે કાંઈ ભોગ આપવો પડે તે માટેની બધી તૈયારીઓ કરી નાખવી જોઈએ.

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## જવાબદાર રાજતંત્રનો રાજમાર્ગ

[ સરદારશ્રીએ વડોદરા રાજ્યના પ્રજામંડળની ૧૫મી બેઠકને વખતે કરેલાં વ્યાખ્યાનોમાંથી. તા. ૨૯–૧૦–’૩૮ તથા ૧–૧૧–’૩૮નાં ‘જન્મભૂમિ’ પરથી ]

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જવાબદાર રાજ્યતંત્ર એ માગ્યે મળે એવી વસ્તુ નથી. એ કંઈ રાજામહારાજાઓએ મહેરબાનીથી પોતાની પ્રજાને કોઈ કાળે આપ્યું નથી અને આપશે નહિ. એ તો પ્રજાએ પોતાના બળથી મેળવવાની વસ્તુ છે. પ્રજા જેવી હોય છે તેવું રાજ્ય તેને મળી રહે છે. નિર્બળ પ્રજા રાજ્યના જુલમોની બરદાસ કરી લે છે. બળવાન પ્રજા હોય તો રાજ્ય પ્રજાની ઇચ્છાને વશ થઈ વર્તે છે. રાજ્યની પ્રજાને જવાબદાર રાજ્યની ભૂખ લાગી હોય તો તેણે પોતે પોતાના પગ ઉપર ઝૂઝવું જોઈશે. પારકા પર આધાર રાખવાથી કે બીજાને દોષ દીધાથી કે રાજ્યના દોષો રડવાથી દહાડો વળે એમ નથી. હરિપુરા મહાસભાએ ચોક્કો માર્ગ બતાવી દીધો છે. મહાસભાનો અવિશ્વાસ કરવાનું કશું

કારણ નથી. એના અનેક પુરાવા રોજને રોજ મળતા જાય છે. ખરી વાત તો એ છે કે હવે આપણે માત્ર આપણું પોતાનું ઘર જ વ્યવસ્થિત કરી દેવાનું રહ્યું છે. પ્રજામંડળે પોતાનું સંગઠન ઝપાટાબંધ મજબૂત કરી લેવું જોઈએ અને તેમ કરવામાં રાજ્ય તરફથી કોઈ જાતની હરકત કરવામાં આવે તો નીડરતાથી એનો મુકાબલો કરી જે મુસીબતો સહેવી પડે તેને રાજીખુશીથી બરદાસ્ત કરી લેવા તૈયાર થઈ જવું જોઈએ. જવાબદાર રાજતંત્ર મેળવવા ઇચ્છનારી પ્રજાને માટે હવે માર્ગ મોકળો થઈ પડેલો છે. આપણી નજર આગળ અનેક દેશીરાજ્યોના ઇતિહાસ ઘડાઈ રહ્યા છે. રાષ્ટ્રીય મહાસભાએ સૌને પોતપોતાના બળ ઉપર એ માર્ગે જવાનો આદેશ આપ્યો છે. જેમણે એ સલાહ માની તેમણે એનાં મીઠાં ફળ ચાખ્યાં છે.
(પ્રમુખપદના વ્યાખ્યાનમાંથી)

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દેશી રાજ્યોમાં જે જુલમો ચાલે છે તે કોઈ પણ દેશ સહન કરી ન શકે દેશી રાજ્યની પ્રજાએ આ જુલમો અત્યાર સુધી સહન કર્યા છે. પણ જો એ સહન કરતી થઈ જાય તો તેથી તે રાંકડી બને છે. રાજા પ્રજાને વશ હોય તો જ પ્રજા રાજાને વશ રહી શકે. હું તમને ખાતરી આપું છું કે, પ્રજાને તેમના હકનું ભાન થાય તો તરત જ તેઓ રાજાને સહેલાઇથી વશ કરી શકે. રાજા પ્રજાને નાલાયક કહે તો પ્રજાને રાજાને નાલાયક કહેવાનો હક છે. પ્રજા જવાબદાર શાસનની માગણી કરે છે ત્યારે પ્રજા નાલાયક છે એમ કહેવામાં આવે છે. પ્રજા એના જવાબમાં કહી શકે કે રાજ્યે જ અમને નાલાયક રાખવાનું પસંદ કર્યું છે તો અમે એવા પણ રાજ્ય કરીશું. બાકી આજે કેટલા રાજાઓ લાયક છે? અને ગાદીએ આવ્યા ત્યારે પણ તેઓ કેટલા લાયક હતા?

અમે ઇચ્છીએ છીએ એ પ્રમાણે રાજ્ય ચાલવું જોઈએ એમ કહેવાનો પ્રજાને પૂરો હક છે કે નહિ એ જ એક સવાલ છે. આ પ્રશ્નનો જગતના ઇતિહાસે નિર્ણય આપી દીધો છે. હિંદુસ્તાનનાં દેશીરાજ્યોને હજુ એનો જવાબ આપવાનો છે. દેશીરાજ્યો સમવાયતંત્રની ભાગીદારીમાં બ્રિટિશ હિંદ સાથે જોડાવા તત્પર બન્યાં છે. પણ એવી ભાગીદારી શા કામની? બ્રિટિશ

હિંદ સ્વતંત્ર બન્યું છે. તેમના પ્રતિનિધિઓ આજે ત્યાં શાસન ચલાવે છે. એટલે એવી ભાગીદારી તેમને ખપતી નથી. તેમણે જણાવી દીધું છે કે, રાજસ્થાનો પોતાની પ્રજાને સમાન સ્વતંત્રતા આપવા માગતા ન હોય તો તેઓ સમવાયતંત્રમાં જોડાવા માગતા નથી. એ નોટીસ મહાસભાએ હરિપુરાની બેઠકમાં ઠોકી ઠોકીને આપી દીધી છે.

બ્રિટિશ સલ્તનત પણુ રાજાઓને પ્રજાને જવાબદાર રાજતંત્ર ન આપવાનું કહેતી નથી. રાજાઓ આ સાર્વભૌમ સત્તા પર મદાર રાખી તેનું ઓથું લેતા હતા, પણુ તે પણુ હવે વિરુદ્ધ નથી. ત્રાવણુકોરના દીવાને પ્રજાની માગણીના જવાબમાં સાર્વભૌમ સત્તાના વિરોધનો વાંધો આગળ કર્યો હતો, પણુ વિલાયતમાં નાયબ વજીર તરત જ બોલી ઊઠ્યો હતો કે એમને કોઈ વાંધો નહોતો. હિંદ સરકારના પોલિટિકલ ખાતામાં મેલ ભરેલો છે. એ પોલિટિકલ ખાતામાં પોલ છે. છતાં એજન્ટો અને રેસિડન્ટોના મનમાં ઊંડે ઊંડે ગમે તેવો ખ્યાલ હોય, પણુ તે ખુલ્લી રીતે બોલતા નથી.

રાજકોટનો દાખલો જુઓ. રાજકોટમાં પંદર દિવસથી કોઈનું રાજ્ય નથી. દીવાન ગોરો છે એટલે ઠાકોરની ગમે તેટલી ઇચ્છા છતાં તે ખસેડી શકતા નથી. હમણાં કોક કાળો દીવાન હોત તો તેને ક્યારનો ઘસડીને ફેંકી દીધો હોત, પણુ આ તો ગોરો દીવાન! એ કહે છે કે, હિંદ સરકારે તેને મોકલ્યો છે એટલે ઠાકોરને તેને ખસેડવાની સત્તા નથી. રાજાને જોઈતો નથી અને દીવાન ખસતો નથી. આ પરિસ્થિતિથી અમલદારો અને પ્રજા વિમાસણુમાં પડી છે. મેં તો રાજકોટની પ્રજાને કહી દીધું છે કે રાજાને દીવાનને ખસેડવાની સત્તા ન હોય તો એવી સત્તાવાળો કોઈ બીજો રાજાને ચૂંટી કાઢો. પોતાનો રાજા ચૂંટવાનો રૈયતને અધિકાર છે, અને એ રાજા પોતાનો દીવાન નીમે.

[બટલર કમિટીના જવાબદાર શાસનને લગતા ૪૦–૪૧મા પેરેગ્રાફોનો ઉલ્લેખ કરતાં સરદારશ્રીએ સાર્વભૌમ સત્તાને જણાવ્યું કે] સાર્વભૌમ સત્તાએ પણુ નિશ્ચય કરી લેવાનો છે કે રાજ્યમાં કંઈ તોફાન થાય તો રાજાને એવો વિશ્વાસ ન રહેવો જોઈએ કે બ્રિટિશ સલ્તનત તેમની પડખે છે. હિંદ સરકારે એવી

સ્પષ્ટ જાહેરાત કરવી જોઈએ. આની ચોખવટ ન થાય ત્યાં સુધી સમવાયતંત્ર સ્વીકારાશું નથી એમ અમે જાહેર કરી દીધું છે.

હરિપુરાના ઠરાવથી મહાસભાએ રાજસ્થાની પ્રજાઓને સ્વાશ્રયી બનવાની હાકલ કરી છે. બહારના માણસો દરમિયાનગીરી કરે છે એવો આક્ષેપ કરવામાં આવે છે; પણ રાજસ્થાનોમાં લડત થતાં પ્રજા પર આફતો ઊતરશે તે વખતે તે હંમેશાં તેની પડખે ઊભી રહેશે એમ હું ખાતરી આપું છું. હિંદુસ્તાનની પ્રજા એક અને અવિભાજ્ય છે. મહાસભા તમારી ઇચ્છા વિના અથવા આપમેળે ખટપટ કરવા માગતી નથી. પ્રજા પોતે જ માગણી કરતી હોય અને તે માટે લડતી હોય ત્યારે મહાસભા મેળ કરાવી આપે.

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# ખરાખરીનો ખેલ

[ મુંબઈમાં કાઠિયાવાડ પ્રજામંડળના આશરા નીચે મળેલી સભાના પ્રમુખસ્થાનેથી સરદારશ્રીએ આપેલું વ્યાખ્યાન. તા. ૧૨–૧૧–'૩૮ના 'જન્મભૂમિ'માંથી ]

ગઈ વખતે જ્યારે આપણે અહીં દાણાબંદર પર મળ્યા હતા ત્યારે, જેઓ રાજકોટના આજના રાજા મનાય છે અને જેમણે રાજકોટની પ્રજાના હૃદય પર સામ્રાજ્ય મેળવેલું છે તે શ્રી. ઢેબરભાઈ થોડાક વખત માટે આપણી વચ્ચે આવી ગયા હતા. જે દિવસે તેઓ છૂટ્યા તે જ દિવસે તેઓ વિમાનમાં અત્રે આવ્યા હતા અને રાજકોટની હકીકત આપણને સંભળાવી હતી. ત્યાર પછીના બનાવો તો તમે વર્તમાનપત્રોમાંથી જાણ્યા હશે.

રાજકોટના ગઈ કાલ સુધીના બનાવોમાં વિશેષ જાણવા જેવું હતું નહિ. રાજકોટમાં સત્તા કોની — ઠાકોરની, ગોરા દીવાન કેડલની કે જૂના દીવાન વીરાવાળાની — તે અનિશ્ચિત હતું. સત્તા કોની છે તે જોવાને એ ત્રણે વચ્ચે અત્યાર સુધી રમત ચાલતી હતી. જૂના દીવાનને ગઈ કાલે ત્રણ મહિનાની રજા આપવામાં આવી છે અને ફરીથી તેઓ કારભારું ન કરે તેવો હુકમ થયો છે.

વળી સરકારનો એજંટ રેસિડેન્ટ કોના પક્ષમાં છે — ગોરા દીવાન કેડલના, જૂના દીવાન વીરાવાળાના કે ઠાકોર સાહેબના —

તેની પણ કોઈને કશી જ ખબર પડતી ન હતી. એટલું જણાઈ આવ્યું છે કે ઠાકોર અને જૂના દીવાનનો એક જ પક્ષ છે અને એક જ રહેવાનો છે.

જ્યાં સુધી રાજકોટની પ્રજા રાજવી ઉપર એટલી સત્તા ન મેળવે કે પ્રજાને પૂછ્યા વિના રાજ્યથી કાંઈ જ થઈ શકે નહિ ત્યાં સુધી રાજકોટમાં અંધેર કારભાર જ ચાલવાનો છે.

હિંદ સરકારનું પોલિટિકલ ખાતું આખી દુનિયામાં સડેલામાં સડેલું ખાતું છે. પરંતુ તે ખાતાંની વાત બહાર આવતી નથી. કદાચ કોઈ વાત બહાર આવે છે તો તે ખોટી વાત જ હોય છે. રેસિડેન્ટ ગિબ્સનને ચોવીસ કલાકમાં બદલીનો હુકમ મળ્યો છે અને તેમનો સેક્રેટરી વિમાનમાં ઊડીને સીમલા ગયો છે એ તો ગપગોળા જ સમજજો. એવી વાતો માનશો નહિ. એમાં ફાયદો નથી. ગમે તેટલા ગોટા કર્યા હોય તોપણ સરકાર ઢાંકપિછોડો જ કરશે.

આપણે તો એ જાણવું છે કે, રાજકોટની પ્રજામાં પોતાનામાં કેટલી ને કેવી તાકાત છે? તેનામાં તાકાત હશે તો બધા જ ધૂળ ફાકે છે. પ્રજાની તાકાત આગળ જગતની જબરજસ્ત સલ્તનતને શિર ઝુકાવવું પડ્યું; તો બિચારા રાજકોટના ઠાકોરનું શું ગજું! પણ એને એમ થયું લાગે છે કે, પ્રજા રાજ્યમાં ભાગ માગે છે તે આપવા કરતાં ભેખ લેવો વધારે સારો. તેણે ભેખ લીધો હોત તો સારું થાત કે તે કોઈ મહારાજા બનતે.

એક કાળ એવો હતો કે હાલનો રાજકોટનો ઠાકોર એક નાનો બાળક હતો. ત્યારે તેના દિલમાં રાજકોટની પ્રજાને માટે ઉમળકો હતો અને ભાવ હતો. તેના પિતા લાખાજીરાજે કોઈ રાજાએ પોતાની પ્રજાને નહિ આપેલો એવો બધા પ્રજાજનોને મતાધિકાર આપ્યો હતો. રાજકોટમાં ધારાસભા હતી. એ ધારાસભામાં મજૂરપક્ષ હતો. રાજકોટનો આજનો ઠાકોર અને એ વખતનો બાળક ત્યારે એ મજૂરપક્ષ વચ્ચે બેસવા માગતો હતો. આવા સોના જેવા છોકરાને તેની આસપાસ ફરી વળેલી કેટલીક વ્યક્તિઓએ અવળી કેળવણી આપીને કાળા કથીર જેવો બનાવી મૂક્યો છે, અને તેની અવદશા કરી છે.

રાજકુટુંબમાં જન્મ્યા એટલે રાજા એમ માનવું નહિ. વાતાવરણ સારું હોય, સાચું શિક્ષણ મળ્યું હોય, અને રાજધર્મ

શીખવવામાં આવ્યો હોય તો ‘રાજા’. પણ રાજકોટનો ઠાકોર તો પ્રજાનું મોં જ જોતો નથી. પ્રજાએ જ્યારે આટલો પોકાર પાડ્યો કે ‘ઠાકોરનાં તો દર્શન જ નથી થતાં’ ત્યારે વળી હમણાં હમણાં તે પ્રજાને જોતાં શીખ્યો છે.

દીવાન પોતાના દીકરાને દીવાનપદ સુપ્રત કરે ને ખાટલામાં પડ્યા પડ્યા રાજ્ય ચલાવે. ઉપરાઉપરી ઇજારાઓ અપાયે જાય, એ બધા સામે પોકાર પાડવાને એક ઢેબરભાઈ પાક્યા ને તેમણે પોકાર પાડ્યો ત્યારે તેમને પકડ્યા. તેમના પકડાવાની સાથે જ રાજકોટે નિશ્ચય કર્યો કે આવું બધું ફરીથી બનવા ન પામે તેવું કરવું છે. મેં સલાહ આપી કે, અંધેર અને જુલમ દૂર કરવાને ઠાકોરની આસપાસના કારભારીઓ હોય, એજન્સી હોય, કોઈ મોટી સલ્તનત હોય કે પછી ગમે તે હોય, તેની સાથે કોઈ પણ ભોગે બાથ ભીડવી જ છે. બીજા કોઈ રાજ્યોને પણ પ્રજાની સામે થવાની ‘ચળ’ થતી હોય તો તેઓ પણ ભલે આવી જાય. અંધેર અને જુલમ ગમે તે ભોગે દૂર કરવાં એમાં મીનમેખ નહિ, એવો નિશ્ચય કરીને જ આ કાર્ય ઉપાડ્યું છે.

ઢેબરભાઈ ગયા પછી તો પોતાની સત્તાની ખબર નહિ એટલે વીરાવાળા, કેડલ અને ઠાકોર ખેલ કર્યાં કરતા હતા. તેઓ જાણતા હતા કે પ્રજા પરિષદના પ્રમુખ ઢેબરભાઈ છે; પણ તેમના વિના બીજાઓને મંત્રણા કરવા બોલાવ્યા. તેમણે તો ચોખ્ખું કહી દીધું કે અમે તો એકડા વગરનાં મીડાં છીએ. ત્યારે વળી ઢેબરભાઈને બોલાવ્યા અને માત્ર વાતો જ કરી. ઢેબરભાઈને મેં જણાવ્યું કે હજી તે ત્રણે અધ્ધર ઊભા છે, તેમના પગ નીચે જમીન નથી. જે દિવસે એ ત્રણનું ઠેકાણું પડશે તે દિવસે તમે જેલમાં હશો. રાજકોટના આટલા જ ભોગમાંથી મળે તો તે સ્વતંત્રતા ટકવાની નથી. એવી સ્વતંત્રતાની કિંમત શી? પોતાની પ્રજાની સામે કોઈ પણ રાજા કદી પણ માથું ન ઊંચકી શકે તેવું આપણે તો કરવું છે.

થોડા દિવસ ભાંજગડો ચાલી ને પેલા ત્રણનું ઠેકાણું પડ્યું. જૂના દીવાનને રજા અપાઈ. જૂના દીવાનને કાઢવાને લગતો ઠરાવ પ્રજા પરિષદમાં આવનાર હતો. પણ એ તો મરેલાને મારવા જેવું હતું. મેં જણાવ્યું કે રાજા કોણ તે વિચારો અને

રાજ્ય પ્રજાની સંમતિથી ચાલે કે નહિ તે જુઓ.

રાજકોટના જૂના દીવાને એવું કહ્યાના સમાચાર મળે છે કે રાજકોટ છોડતાં પહેલાં રાજકોટને મેદાનમેદાન કરી નાખીશ. એવા ગુમાની તો રાવણથી માંડીને કેટલાયે થઈ ગયા. એવાં મગતરાંનો તે શો હિસાબ? રાજકોટ મેદાનમેદાન થતાં પહેલાં તો કંઈક રાજ્યો મેદાનમેદાન બની ગયાં હશે.

પેલો ગોરો ગુલામ ૭ માસના પંદર હજાર રૂપિયા ખાતર આટલું દમન કેમ કરી રહ્યો છે? ઠાકોરને તો તેનું મોઢું ગમતું જ નથી. તે તો ઠાકોર ઉપર લાદવામાં આવ્યો છે.

જૂના દીવાનનાં બે પ્યાદાં ચાર જણાની રાજકોટની કાઉન્સિલમાં રાખવામાં આવ્યાં. તેમણે બધાએ ઢેબરભાઈને પત્ર લખ્યો કે તમારે કાઉન્સિલ પાસે આવવાનું છે. ઢેબરભાઈએ તો જણાવ્યું કે, અમે તો રાજા સાથે વાત કરીએ, કાઉન્સિલને અમે ઓળખતા નથી. પરમ દિવસે તેમનો ટેલિફોન મળ્યો ત્યારે મેં જણાવ્યું કે હવે તમારો બિસ્રો બાંધી મૂકજો. ને ગઈ કાલે સવારમાં જ તેમની ધરપકડ થઈ. અને ગઈ કાલે હુકમ છૂટ્યો કે સભાઓ ભરશો નહિ, દેખાવો કરશો નહિ. રાજકોટ જેવા નાના સરખા રાજ્યમાં ૧૪૪મી કલમ જાહેર થઈ,—જાણે કોઈ મોટી સલ્તનત ચલાવવી હતી! રાજ્યનો બહિષ્કાર કરવાને સવારથી જ દરબારગઢ આગળ પિકેટિંગ શરૂ થયું.

કેદખાનાઓમાં મોતની સજા પામેલા કેદીઓને ફાંસી દેવાને કેદીઓમાંથી ફાંસિયાઓ પસંદ કરવામાં આવે છે. ફાંસી આપવા માટે તેમને પાંચેક રૂપિયા અને થોડાક દિવસની સજા માફ થાય છે. બરાબર આવાં જ ગણવાં જોઈએ એવાં કોઈ માણસો રાજકોટ રાજ્યે રાખ્યાં લાગે છે. બાર કલાકમાં તેમણે રાજકોટની પ્રજાના વાંસા પર અગિયાર અગિયાર લાઠીમાર વરસાવ્યા, સંખ્યાબંધ બહેનોનાં માથાં ફૂટ્યાં, સંખ્યાબંધ માણસો બેભાન બન્યા, અનેક ઘવાયા અને લોહીની ધારાઓ છૂટી.

ગઈ કાલે રાજકોટમાં રાક્ષસનું રાજ્ય હતું. એ રાક્ષસ રાજ્યનો પ્રજાએ સામનો કર્યો. એમાં રાજકોટની પ્રજા સીધા માર્ગ ઉપરથી હાલી નથી કે ડરી નથી અને તેથી જ તમે તેમને મુબારકબાદી આપવાને આવી જંગી સભામાં ભેગાં મળ્યાં છો.

દેશીરાજ્યોની પ્રજાઓ જો આ રીતે લડશે તો તેને હરાવી શકે એટલા રાક્ષસો હિંદમાં છે જ નહિ. રાજકોટમાં રાક્ષસી અવતાર પેદા થયો છે, પરંતુ રાજકોટની પ્રજા મનમાં રોષ રાખ્યા સિવાય પોતાનું કાર્ય શાંતિ અને અહિંસાથી કર્યે જશે તો તેનું કાર્ય થોડાક દિવસોનું જ છે.

હું જ્યારે રાજકોટ પરિષદમાં ગયો હતો ત્યારે તો કામ માટે જોઈતા થોડાક માણસો પણ મુશ્કેલીથી મળતા હતા. આજે તો રાજકોટ પર ઈશ્વરની એવી કૃપા થઈ છે કે ગઈ કાલે સવાર સુધીમાં પકડાયેલા અગિયાર 'ડિક્ટેટરો'માં એક એક નામ સાંભળીને રાજી થઈએ એવા પકડાયા છે.

મને ઘણા પૂછતા હતા કે બૅરિસ્ટર ચુડગર કોઈ દિવસ જેલમાં જશે? ચુડગર જેવા પણ જેલમાં ગયા. કોઈ કહે કે હું કેદમાં નહિ જાઉં તો તેને પણ જવું પડે છે.

રાજકોટમાં એક પણ માણસ રાજ્યના તરફ નથી. કેટલા દિવસ લાઠીઓ મારશે? એક દિવસ, બે દિવસ . . . પણ ત્રીજે દિવસે તો રાક્ષસના હાથ ભાંગી જ જવાના છે. લાઠી મારનારને કોઈ સામો પથ્થર મારે, લાઠી મારે, ગાળ દે, તો તેનામાંનો રાક્ષસ વીફરે. પણ સામે થયા વિના માર સહન કરે તો તેમાંથી ઈશ્વરીભાવ પેદા થાય છે. આ જ સત્યાગ્રહનું રહસ્ય છે.

રાજકોટના આ સિતમો દ્વારા માત્ર રાજકોટનું જ નહિ પણ આખા કાઠિયાવાડનું કોકડું ઝપાટાબંધ ઊકલી રહ્યું છે. રાજકોટનાં પ્રજાજનો પર પડેલી સોટીઓ રાજકોટનાં સિંહાસન પર જ પડી છે. પરંતુ એક દિવસ એવો આવશે કે રાજકોટનો રાજા પ્રજાને નમતો આવશે અને આંસુ પાડશે. આજે રાજકોટની બહેનો પર જેણે લાઠીઓ વીંઝાવરાવી તે તો રસ્તે પડી ગયો હશે; પણ એક દિવસ એવો આવશે કે જ્યારે પ્રજા પાસે સત્તા આવશે, અને ત્યારે તેને રાજકોટની હદમાં પ્રવેશવાનો પણ અધિકાર રહેશે નહિ. કેડલે એક નિવેદન બહાર પાડ્યું હતું. તેનો અર્થ હું સ્પષ્ટ કરું છું. તેણે જણાવ્યું હતું કે 'એક ગૃહસ્થ સંમત ન હતા.' તે ગૃહસ્થ તો જેલમાં બેઠા છે કેમ કે તે એકડો હતો ને બીજાં તો મીંડાં હતાં. 'બહારનો દોરીસંચાર' કરનાર એટલે હું. પણ હું એને કહું છું કે, મારા વિના રાજકોટનું કોકડું કદી પણ ઊકલનાર

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નથી. શું શું કરવાનું છે તે હું બતાવી આપીશ. 'બહારનો' તો હું નહિ, પણ પાંચ હજાર માઈલ દૂરથી આવેલો તે કે જેને આખરે જવાનું છે. રાજકોટ એટલે શું? રાજકોટમાં તો લાખાજીરાજે રાજ્ય કર્યાં છે અને કબા ગાંધીએ દીવાનપદાં ભોગવ્યાં છે. એ રાજકોટમાંથી આબરૂ ગુમાવી પાછા ભાગવું પડશે તે રાજકોટ બતાવી આપશે. મૂઠી જેટલું રાજકોટ આખા હિંદને હલાવી નાખશે અને ઠાકોરની શુદ્ધિ ઠેકાણે લાવશે. હિંદના રાજાઓ સાવચેત થઈ જાય. સાર્વભૌમ સત્તાને જોરે તેઓ કૂદતા હોય તો તેઓ જાણી લે કે સાર્વભૌમ સત્તા વચ્ચે પડશે તો તેના સાંધા ઢીલા થઈ જવાના છે.

ગઈ કાલે સવારે રાજકોટના સમાચાર વાંચ્યા અને હું નાચી ઊઠયો. ગઈ કાલે સવારથી હું તો રસના ઘૂંટડા પીતો થઈ ગયો છું. રાજકોટમાં જે કાંઈ બન્યું તે ઉપરથી મને લાગ્યું કે ખરેખરી લડતનાં હવે પગલાં પડયાં ખરાં. સત્તા પચાવવાનું પૂરેપૂરું મૂલ નથી આપ્યું ત્યાં સુધી કદી જો સત્તા મળશે તોપણ તે ગુમાવાઈ જશે. રાજકોટની પ્રજા આજે થોડુંક લઈને રાજી થઈ જાય તો રાજકોટના ખેડૂતોએ જે આશાઓ બાંધી છે તે કઈ રીતે પૂરી થવાની હતી?

ઘણી ભાંજગડો પછી રાજકોટના સત્તાવાળાઓ જવાબદાર રાજ્યતંત્રને બદલે પ્રજાને માત્ર સુધરાઈ સોંપવા માગતા હતા. પ્રજાએ તેમને કહી દેવું જોઈએ કે ગલીઓ અને પાયખાનાં તમે જ સાફ કરાવો ને. અમારે તે એવી સત્તામાં શું પૂળો મૂકવો છે? પ્રજાને તો રાજકોટનું રાજ્ય કરવું છે. રાજકુટુંબોમાં જન્મેલાંને જ યાવત્ચંદ્રદિવાકરૌ રાજ્ય કરવાના હક છે એવી માન્યતા ધરાવતા હો તો ઇતિહાસ વાંચી જજો. રાજવીઓ પ્રજાની મરજી સંપાદન કરીને, પ્રજાને રાજી કરીને રહે તો હિંદના લોકો રાજવીઓનું નિકંદન કાઢવા નથી ઇચ્છતા. પરંતુ રાજાઓએ એટલું તો સમજવું જોઈએ કે પ્રજા "બાપુ! બાપુ!" કરતી હતી તે કાળ ક્યારનોયે વહી ગયો છે.

રાજકોટની પ્રજાએ જે સંકટો સહન કર્યાં છે તેનાથી હું રાજી થાઉં છું. પણ આપણો ધર્મ શો છે? આપણે રાજકોટની પડખે છીએ તેનો પુરાવો શો? ગઈ વખતે (વ્યાખ્યાન ૨ જુઓ) તો રાજકોટની પડખે ઊભા રહેવાની તૈયારી રાખવાની અને તે વિષે વિચાર કરી રાખવાની વાત કરી હતી. પણ આજે તો ફેંસલો કરી નાખવાનો

છે. જેને માતાની આબરૂ વહાલી હોય તેમણે તો તૈયાર બનવું જ જોઈએ. અમુક ગાડીમાં રાજકોટ જવાનું કહું તો તે ગાડીમાં જવાને તૈયાર હોય તેવા માણસોની મારે જરૂર છે. રાજકોટના સત્તાવાળાઓ તો બે જ કામ કરે છે. એક તો જેલ ભરવાનું અને બીજું લાઠીઓ મરાવવાનું. જેલ તો ભરાઈ ગઈ છે. લાઠી ક્યારે બંધ થાય છે તે હવે જોવાનું છે.

રાજકોટની પ્રજાને મારી તો એક જ સલાહ છે કે, રાજના એક પણ અધિકારી સાથે, રાજના એક પણ નોકર સાથે કે રાજ્ય સાથે કોઈ જાતનો જરા પણ સંબંધ રાખશો નહિ. દરબારગઢમાં દાવા ચાલતા હોય કે રાજ્ય સાથે બીજી કોઈ પણ લેવાદેવા હોય તો તે બધું અત્યારે જવા દેજો. રાજકોટમાંથી ગ્રહણ કાઢીને સ્નાન કરીને આપણે રાજકોટમાં પ્રવેશ કરીશું ત્યારે એ બધાંની પતાવટ નિરાંતે કરીશું. ખુદ રાજકોટના ઠાકોર કેડલને લઈને ગામની ગલીઓમાં મોટરમાં ફરવા નીકળે કે સવારીઓ કાઢે, પણ તેમને જોવા જશો નહિ; ઘરનાં બારણાં બંધ કરીને બેસજો. રાજકોટની પ્રજા પાસે આ એક જ મહાન મંત્ર છે. દરબારગઢ ઉપર પિકેટિંગ કરવું પડે તેમાં રાજકોટની પ્રજાની જોઈએ તેવી શોભા નથી.

રાજકોટને મારે મોકલવાનો સંદેશ તો હું મોકલી જ દઈશ. ભાવનગરની અને ધ્રાંગધ્રાની પ્રજાઓ પણ સળવળાટ કરી રહી છે. તેમને મેં જણાવ્યું છે કે હમણાં તમારો પાટલો થોભી રાખો, માંડશો નહિ. રાજકોટનો જમણવાર પૂરો થઈ જવા દો. રાજકોટ પર નજર કરો, બધી શક્તિ હમણાં રાજકોટમાં રોકી દો.

બધા ભાઈઓએ પોતાની શક્તિ પહોંચે તે રીતે ધન અને માણસોથી રાજકોટને મદદ કરવાની છે. રાજકોટ મિલનું ભૂંગળું તો બંધ થયું છે, ઇલેક્ટ્રિક પાવર હાઉસની પણ લગભગ એવી જ દશા છે, ઇજારાઓ પણ મરી ગયેલા જેવા જ છે. એટલે રાજકોટના સત્તાવાળાઓ પ્રજાનું નહિ માને તો રાજ્યને દેવાળું કાઢવું પડશે.

પ્રજા વગરનો રાજા ક્યાંય નથી. રાજકોટના રાજાના સલાહકારો સમજી લે કે હવેથી પ્રજાની લડત તે બચ્ચાંના ખેલ નથી. રાજકોટમાં વહેલા લોહીના એક એક ટીપામાંથી અનેક મરણિયા પેદા થશે અને પ્રજાજનોના એક એક ટીપાનો હિસાબ માગશે.

કાઠિયાવાડીઓને મારી એક વિનંતી એ છે કે હમણાં ક્યાંય

બીજે ધ્યાન ખેંચશો નહિ. પહેલું રાજકોટનું કોકડું ઉકલવા દો, પછીથી તમારાં કોકડાં વધારે સહેલાઈથી ઉકલી જશે. એ સંગ્રામનો ફેંસલો તો ત્યારે જ થશે, જ્યારે આપણે માગી રહ્યા છીએ તે બધું જ મળશે. રાજકોટના આ સંગ્રામે તો આખા હિંદનું ધ્યાન ખેંચ્યું છે.

રાજકોટ કાઠિયાવાડનું કેન્દ્ર છે. કાઠિયાવાડનું સત્ત્વ રાજકોટમાં છે, તે કાઠિયાવાડનું નાક છે. રાજકોટના સંગ્રામમાં કાઠિયાવાડની ઇજ્જતનો સવાલ છે. આઠ કરોડની ગુલામીની લડત ત્યાં લડાઈ રહી છે. સોટીએ સોટીએ રાજકોટની ગુલામી તૂટતી જાય છે.

આજે રાજકોટમાં વફાદારી હોય તો તે એક જ માણસ પ્રત્યે છે અને તે માણસ ઢેબરભાઈ છે. બીજા કોઈ પ્રત્યે રાજકોટમાં વફાદારી નથી.

રાજકોટની પ્રજાપરિષદની મુંબઈની સમિતિએ નાણાં ઉઘરાવવાનું કાર્ય શરૂ કરી દેવું જોઈએ. અને તેમાં સર્વેએ પોતાની ખુશીથી અને ઉદારતાથી પોતાનો ફાળો આપવો જોઈએ.

કાઠિયાવાડની ઇજ્જત શોભાવી રહેલાં રાજકોટનાં પ્રજાજનોને મુબારકબાદી આપીને ઈશ્વરને પ્રાર્થના કરું છું કે, રાજકોટને જે જોઈએ તે તે સત્વર આપે અને તમને તમારો ધર્મ સમજાવે.

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## રાજકોટના રંગ

[તા. ૨૧-૧૧-'૩૮ના રોજ અમદાવાદમાં આપેલું સરદારશ્રીનું વ્યાખ્યાન. તા. ૨૨-૧૧-'૩૮ના 'ગુજરાત સમાચાર'માંથી]

તમે બધા આજે મારી પાસેથી રાજકોટનો ઇતિહાસ સાંભળવા ભેગા થયા હશો. હું ઘણાંયે વર્ષોથી કાઠિયાવાડનું કોકડું ઉકેલવા પ્રયત્ન કરતો હતો અને અનેક વખત નિરાશા પણ જણાવી હતી અને ક્યાં પગ મૂકવો તેની સૂઝ પડતી ન હતી. અને મારા જેવાને તો એક આદત થઈ પડી છે કે પગ મૂકું ત્યાંથી પાછું ના પડવું. જ્યાં પગ મૂકી પાછા ફરવું પડે ત્યાં પગ મૂકવાની મને આદત નથી. અંધારામાં ભૂસકો મારવાની મને ટેવ નથી. હું કેટલા વખતથી જોયા કરતો હતો કે રાજકોટ કે કાઠિયાવાડમાંથી કોઈ એવો માણસ મળે કે જેની ઉપર મારી નજર ઠરે અને જેને ભરોસે હું કામ ઉપાડી શકું. બાકી રાજકોટ એ તો એ રાજ્ય છે કે જ્યાં કબા ગાંધીએ દીવાનગીરી

કરી છે અને જેના પુત્રે દુનિયાભરમાં હિંદને ઓળખાવ્યું છે અને જેણે સ્વમાનના પાઠ ભણાવ્યા છે. એ કાઠિયાવાડનું ઋણ કઈ રીતે ચૂકવાય ? એ ઋણ માટે તો ઉજાગરા પણ ઘણા કર્યા છે, અને છેવટે ઈશ્વરની દયા થઈ છે અને ઈશ્વરે તે ઋણ ઉતારવાનો રસ્તો બતાવ્યો છે.

મને લાખાજીરાજના રાજકોટનું એ સ્મરણ આવે છે કે જ્યારે લાખાજીરાજે ગાંધીજીને આમંત્રી મારી અને ગાંધીજી વચ્ચે બેસીને ભાષણ કર્યું હતું. તેણે તો એ કહ્યું હતું કે, જો બીજા ગાંધીજીના શિષ્ય થઈ શકે તો તે માન મને કેમ ના મળે ? એવા નિખાલસ દિલનો, સ્વતંત્રતાપ્રેમી એ રાજા હતો.

લાખાજીરાજે પોતાની પ્રજાને બંધારણ આપ્યું હતું, જે કાઠિયાવાડના કોઈ રાજાઓએ હજી સુધી કર્યું નથી. તે બંધારણમાં તો પુખ્ત ઉંમરના બધાને મતાધિકાર હતો. તેઓ તો ધારાસભામાં આવતા અને રૂબરૂ ચર્ચા પણ કરતા. તે વખતે તો રાજા પ્રજા વચ્ચે એટલો બધો મીઠો સંબંધ હતો. તે વખતે આજનો રાજા એ તો બિચારો નાનો બાળક હતો. ત્યારે તો તેને એ ધારાસભામાં મજૂરોનો પક્ષ જોઈ તેની વચ્ચે જઈ બેસવાનું મન થતું. પણ કાળનું ચોઘડિયું કેવાયે સંયોગોમાં આવ્યું કે લાખાજીરાજ ચાલ્યા ગયા અને આ રાજાને મૂર્ખાઓની રાજકુમાર કૉલેજમાં મોકલાવાયો. એ કૉલેજમાં તો માણસનું જાનવર બનાવવામાં આવે છે. ત્યાં તો જેને દરેક જાતનાં દારૂનાં નામ આવડે અને પીતાં આવડે તે હોશિયાર ગણાય. ત્યાં તો રૈયતથી અલગ કેમ રહેવું તે શીખવવામાં આવે છે.

પણ હવે બધા સમજી ગયા છે કે, એ ખોટી રમત હવે ચાલવાની નથી અને તેથી તે બંધ કરવાનો વિચાર ચાલે છે. છતાં આના કરતાં પણ જે ભૂંડું છે તે હજી બંધ થતું નથી. અહીં જાનવર જેવાં બનાવ્યા પછી ઈંગ્લંડ લઈ જવામાં આવે છે. મેં તો જોયું છે કે ત્યાંથી આવેલા રાજા કેટલાય કેવળ ગમાર થઈને અહીં આવે છે અને તેમણે દેશને પારાવાર નુકસાન કર્યું છે. ત્યાં તેઓ સારી રીતે ધન ખર્ચે તેથી ત્યાં તો ફાયદો જ છે. આમ શિકારીઓ અહીં આવે છે અને શિકારને ઉપાડી જાય છે.

રાજકોટના રાજાને તો આજે એટલી ચંડાળ ભૂતાવળ વળગી છે કે રાજાને દિશા સૂઝતી નથી. તેને ખબર પડતી નથી કે તેનો ધણી કોણ છે? તેને આજે જગત કયાં જઈ રહ્યું છે, હિંદુસ્તાનની પ્રજા આજે કયાં છે, આજનો યુગ કયો છે અને તેની પ્રજા કયાં જઈ રહી છે, તેની તેને ખબર નથી. બ્રિટિશ હિંદની અને રાજ્યોની પ્રજા વચ્ચે જુદા જુદા શા સંબંધ છે તેની હિંદના અનેક રાજાઓને આજે ખબર નથી. એ તો એમ જ સમજી બેઠા છે કે પોતે ઈશ્વરી અંશ છે. "ખમ્મા બાપુ" કહેનારાઓ પણ એટલા બધા વધી ગયા છે કે બાપુને છીંક આવે ત્યારે ખોબા ધરે છે કે રખે નાક ભોંય ન પડી જાય!

આ તો લાખાજીરાજનું રાજકોટ છે. કબા ગાંધીની દીવાન-ગીરીવાળું રાજકોટ છે કે જ્યાં ગાંધીજી ઊછર્યા છે. એ તો એક પવિત્ર સ્થાન છે. ત્યાં તો આપણામાંના કોઈની ઉપર દોષનો કાંઈ છાંટો ઊડી ના શકે. ખેડૂતો માટે જેમ બારડોલીએ પદાર્થપાઠરૂપે આપણી પાસે એક વસ્તુ મૂકી છે, તેમ રાજસ્થાનોની પ્રજા માટે રાજકોટ પણ એ જ પદાર્થપાઠ મૂકવા માગે છે. રાજસ્થાનોની પ્રજાની મુક્તિ શી રીતે થવાની છે તે આજે રાજકોટ બતાવી રહ્યું છે. ત્યાં તો એક અદ્‌ભુત લડાઈ ચાલી રહી છે.

આજના રાજા ગાદીએ બેઠા ત્યારે રાજની સિલકે ૪૮ લાખ રૂપિયા હતા; અને હમણાં રાજ્યમાં પરિષદ ભરાઈ તે વખતે આઠ હજાર રહ્યા છે! વીસ લાખની તો જમીનો પણ વેચી નાખી છે!

આજનો રાજા એ તો બિલકુલ નિર્દોષ હતો. આજે તો એને પૈસા અને બાટલી જોઈએ છે. એના પોતાના લોકોએ જ એના ભૂંડા હાલ કર્યા છે. પરિષદના મંત્રી શ્રી. ઢેબરભાઈએ પાંચ લેખ 'જન્મભૂમિ'માં લખ્યા હતા અને મોકલ્યા હતા અને મને કહ્યું કે રસ્તો બતાવો. મેં તેમને કહ્યું કે હવે લેખ લખ્યે દહાડો નહિ વળે. મેં પૂછ્યું, તમે પ્રજાની નાડીપરીક્ષા કરી છે? બાકી હું કાંઈ એજન્સીને અરજીઓ કરવામાં માનતો નથી. આજે બધા રાજાઓ માને છે કે આપણે સાર્વભૌમ સત્તાને મળીએ તો કાંઈ થશે. આજે તે બધા તે સત્તાની સામે જોઈને બેઠા છે કે હવે શું કરવું. કરવાનું શું હોય? પોક પાડો.

ખરી સાર્વભૌમ સત્તા એ કાંઈ ઉપરની સરકાર નથી, પણ ખરી સાર્વભૌમ સત્તા એ તો તમારી પ્રજા છે. તમે બીજી આશા

રાખતા હો તો તમારો બધો હિસાબ ખોટો પડવાનો છે. હમણાં મુંબઈમાં કેટલાક ભેગા મળ્યા અને સાર્વભૌમ સત્તાને વચ્ચે પડવા જણાવ્યું. પણ એ સત્તા રાજકોટમાં શું કરવાની હતી ? શું રાજકોટમાં લશ્કર ઉતારવાની છે ? કોઈ પરણાવનાર ગોરે કોઈનું ઘર ચલાવી આપ્યાનું જાણ્યું છે ? એ તો લગ્ન કરાવી આપે. રેસિડન્ટ હોય તે તો ગાદીએ બેસાડીને માથે મુગટ મૂકી આપે, પણ રાજ શી રીતે ચલાવી આપે ? રાજકોટને તો તેના કારભારી પણ વફાદાર નથી મળ્યા. આજે તો ગાદીઓની તળેનું પડ બધું ઊધઈથી ખવાઈ ગયું છે.

મેં તો શરૂઆતથી જ કહ્યું કે આપણી પાસે તો એક જ માર્ગ છે. શ્રી. ઢેબરભાઈ પણ શરૂઆતમાં તો ડરતે ડરતે પગ મૂકતા હતા. પણ ઈશ્વરે તેને રસ્તો બતાવ્યો કે તારે આ બધા ઇજારાઓ સામે શરૂઆત કરવી જોઈએ. એથી તો એમણે જુગારખાના સામે પોકાર કર્યો. તેમણે હિંમત બતાવી એટલે તેમને પકડ્યા અને લાઠીઓ બતાવી. મને જ્યારે ખબર પડ્યા કે ઢેબરભાઈને પકડ્યા ત્યારે મેં કહ્યું કે ઢેબરભાઈને પકડનાર કોણ છે. મેં કહ્યું કે, યાદ રાખજો કે રાજ્ય પર એ લાઠી પડી છે અને રાજ્યના ભુક્કા ઊડી જવાના છે. પછી તરત મુંબઈમાં સભા ભરાઈ તેનું બળ સાંભળીને તરત ઢેબરભાઈને છોડી મૂકવા પડ્યા.

[ત્યારબાદ તેમના સૂચનથી રાજકોટમાં પરિષદ કેવી રીતે ભરાઈ તેનો ઉલ્લેખ કરતાં તેમણે જણાવ્યું કે] હું રાજકોટ આવવાનો છું એમ જાણતાં 'ભાઈસાબ, તમે રાજકોટ ના આવવા દેતા' એવા કાગળો અને તારો ગાંધીજીને મળ્યા. ગાંધીજીએ મને પૂછ્યું કે આ બધું શું છે ? ત્યારે મેં કહ્યું કે, મેં તો રાજકોટની પ્રજાને વચન આપ્યું છે ને શ્રી. ઢેબરભાઈ તો પરિષદના સેક્રેટરી છે. અને કાઠિયાવાડ પ્રજા પરિષદના સુકાન માટે મને મોકલનાર પણ તમે જ હતા. ને ખાસ સેક્રેટરી પર પ્રહાર થાય એ તો મારા પર પ્રહાર થયા બરાબર છે. તેમાં તો મારી ઇજ્જત અને મારી આબરૂ પર હાથ નંખાયા જેવું છે અને તે હું બરદાસ્ત કરવા તૈયાર નથી.

મને ગાંધીજીએ કહ્યું કે તું ત્યાં જઈશ અને તને મનાઈહુકમ મળશે તો શું કરશે ? મેં કહ્યું કે, રાજકોટની જેલમાં મને પચાવવા જેટલી જગ્યા જ નથી અને જો પચાવે તો તો તેથી રાજકોટનું અને કાઠિયાવાડનું કોકડું ઊકલી જવાનું છે. મને તો તમે આશીર્વાદ આપો એટલે બસ છે.

રાજકોટમાં સભા ભરાય તે પહેલાં જૂના દીવાને મને બોલાવ્યો હતો. તે તે વખતે માંદો હતો અને ખાટલામાં હતો. તેને મેં કહ્યું હતું કે હું અહીં કાંઈ મુડદાને મારવા નથી આવ્યો. કાળો હાથી કાઢી સફેદ હાથી અમારે નથી જોઈતો. પણ હું રાજ્ય સારું કેમ થાય તે જોવા માટે જ આવ્યો છું.

પ્રજાને પણ હું એ જ કહેતો હતો કે દીવાન કોને નીમવો એ સત્તા આપણે મેળવવાની વાત છે. એ વસ્તુ તો અનાદિ કાળથી ચાલતી આવેલી વસ્તુ છે કે રાજાને જો રાજ્ય કરતાં ના આવડતું હોય તો તેને પદભ્રષ્ટ કરવો. પછી પણ મેં એ જ વાત કહી હતી. જ્યારે નવા દીવાન આવ્યા અને તે બધી ગધ્ધામસ્તી ચલાવતા હતા ત્યારે ભાદરણમાંથી મેં કહ્યું હતું કે, પ્રજાએ હવે પોતાનો રાજા ચૂંટી લેવો પડશે. જ્યારે એ વાત કહી ત્યારે રાજ્યમાં એક કમિટી નિમાઈ. કોંગ્રેસનો તો ઠરાવ છે કે તે રાજાઓ સાથે મિત્રાચારીનો સંબંધ રાખવા ઇચ્છે છે. પણ જો રાજ્યમાં અંધેર ચલાવવું હોય તો કોંગ્રેસ એ ટગર ટગર જોઈ રહેવા માટે સાક્ષી બનવાની નથી, કારણ બ્રિટિશ હિંદની પ્રજા અને રાજસ્થાનોની પ્રજા એ એક અને અવિભાજ્ય છે.

આજે રાજકોટ એટલે હિન્દુસ્તાન એમ સમજી લેજો. ત્યાંની પ્રજાને પણ એ જ કહું છું કે તમે નિર્ભય થઈને લડયા કરજો. માણસો કે પૈસાની ખોટ નથી પડવાની યાદ રાખજો કે, આ લડત જેટલી લાંબી ચાલશે એટલાં કાઠિયાવાડના રાજાઓનાં સિંહાસનોનાં મૂળિયાં હાલી જવાનાં છે.

આ બાબતમાં કોઈ પણ રીતે સમાધાન ન હોઈ શકે. તેનો ફેંસલો તો એ જ રીતે થવાનો છે કે તમારે પ્રજા માગે તેવું રાજ્ય આપવું જ પડશે. રાજ્ય કેવું કરવું અને કેમ કરવું અને કાયદા કેમ ઘડવા અને કેમ નહિ તે કામ કાંઈ કેડલનું કે ગિબ્સનનું નથી. તેમ કરવાનો તેમને અધિકાર નથી. રાજ કેમ કરવું એ માટે તો રાજકોટની પ્રજાને પૂછવું પડશે. જે પ્રજાના પ્રતિનિધિઓ આજે જેલમાં પડયા છે એમને પૂછવું પડશે.

આજે 'ટાઇમ્સ'માં એક ડહાપણભર્યો લેખ આવ્યો છે. તે લખે છે કે આ તો કેવળ મિથ્યા લડત છે અને પૈસાની બરબાદી થાય છે. આજે એકાએક 'ટાઇમ્સ'ને દયા છૂટી આવી છે સાત વર્ષે જ્યારે અંધેર કારભારથી પ્રજા કચડાઈ રહી હતી ત્યારે કાંઈ ન સૂઝયું. પણ હવે જ્યારે નાક દબાયું ત્યારે તેની એ બધી ડહાપણભરી

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સલાહ ચરૂ થઈ અત્યારે શી એવી ગરજ આવી છે કે દયા ખાવા નીકળી પડયા છો? રૂ. ૫૦૦ના દીવાનને બદલે રૂ. ૨૫૦૦નો દીવાન બોલાવાયો ત્યારે કેમ કાંઈ ના લખાયું? આખા મુંબઈ ઇલાકાનું તંત્ર ચલાવવા રૂ. ૫૦૦નો પ્રધાન છે ત્યારે ખાબોચિયા જેટલા રાજકોટનું તંત્ર ચલાવવા રૂ. ૨૫૦૦ના પગારથી ૭૨ વર્ષના બુઢ્ઢાને બોલાવવામાં આવે છે ત્યારે કેમ કાંઈ બોલાતું નથી? અમારે એવા ઘરડા બળદને ગાડી નથી આપવી. અમારે તો હાલના અંધેર રાજ્ય કારભારનો ભુક્કો કરી નાખવો છે અને તેની ફરી રચના કરી તેને સજીવન કરવું છે. રાજકોટનો તો આપણે એક નમૂનો કરી બતાવવો છે. રાજાઓને પણ કહું છું કે જો તેઓ નહીં સમજે તો તેમનું પણ એમ જ થવાનું છે.

જ્યારે રાજકોટમાં પરિષદ ભરાઈ ત્યારે એક યોજના ખાનગીમાં ઘડાઈ કે એક ખાટકી લાવો કે જે કતલ કરી શકે. રેસિડન્ટ મિ૦ ગિબ્સનને ત્યાં એ કૉન્ફરન્સ ભરાઈ અને એ બધાને લાગ્યું કે એ કામ કોઈ ગોરો દીવાન મોટા પગારથી કરી શકશે. તે માટે એકાએક સહીદસ્કત થઈ ગયા અને નવો દીવાન પણ આવી ગયો.

અને જ્યારે જૂનો દીવાન મળ્યો ત્યારે તેણે આ વાત મારાથી છુપાવી. તેને પણ મેં એમ કહ્યું હતું કે, આ લડત કોઈ વ્યક્તિ સામે નથી પણ હાલની પદ્ધતિ સામે છે. આ બધું ચાલતું હતું ત્યાં તો ઇંગ્લંડથી એ દિવસમાં હવામાંથી ઊડીને ૭૨ વર્ષનો બુઢ્ઢો એકદમ અહીં આવી પડયો અને પેલા જૂના દીવાન તેના મંત્રી થઈ બેઠા.

આ નવા દીવાન પણ આ દેશમાં બહુ રહી ગયા છે. બહુ નામના મેળવેલી છે! તેમનું નામ વેઇટિંગ લિસ્ટ પર પડયું હશે. ઇંડિયા ગવર્નમેન્ટમાં આવું એક મોટું લિસ્ટ રહે છે. પહેલાં તો તે આવીને ગામડાંમાં ગયા ને ખેડૂતોને કહેવા લાગ્યા કે તમે હવે સીધી અરજી કરો. ગામડાના ખેડૂતો પહેલાં તો ન સમજ્યા કે આ વળી કોણ આવ્યું છે. તેમણે કહ્યું કે અરજી સીધી જ હોય; આડી અરજી કેવી રીતે થાય? અમે તો ઢેબરભાઈ કહેશે એમ કરીશું. ત્યારે તેમણે ખેડૂતોને કહ્યું કે, ઢેબરભાઈ એ તો બિનવફાદાર માણસ છે અને તમારા તો બાપદાદાઓએ પણ રાજા પ્રત્યે વફાદારી કરી છે અને તમારે પણ એ પ્રમાણે વફાદારી કરવી જોઈએ. પણ દીવાનને ખબર નહિ હોય કે, તેમના બાપદાદા પણ અહીં લૂંટતા આવ્યા છે અને તમે પણ લૂંટવા આવ્યા છો, એની બધાને ખબર છે.

તે આવ્યો ત્યારથી તેણે ઓર્ડિનન્સો ઉપર ઓર્ડિનન્સો કાઢવા માંડયા છે. પણ લોકોએ તે તોડવા માંડયા છે. સભાબંધીનો હુકમ છેવટે જ્યારે તેને પાછો ખેંચી લેવો પડયો ત્યારે લોકો પણ સમજી ગયા કે આ તો પોલું ઢોલ છે. જ્યારે તેણે બધા જોર કરવા માંડયા અને પ્રજા દબાઈ નહિ ત્યારે રાજાને પણ લાગ્યું કે આ તો કાંઈ કરી શકે એમ નથી ને પ્રજા દબાઈ નહિ. તેથી તેણે કહ્યું કે તું મારે નથી જોઈતો. હજામત કરતો હોય છતાં પાસે હજામતનો સારો સાજ ના હોય તો તે હજામ પણ શા કામનો? પણ દીવાન કહે કે હું નહિ જાઉં, કારણ કે મને તો ગવર્નમેન્ટ ઓફ ઇન્ડિયાએ બોલાવેલો છે. આમાં એજન્સીવાળા વચ્ચે બેઠેલા હતા. છતાં તેમની સ્થિતિ તો સૂડી વચ્ચે સોપારી જેવી હતી.

તેણે રાજ્યના નવા આગેવાનોને પણ તેડાવ્યા અને સાહેબનું તેડું એટલે ગયા પણ ખરા. પણ એ બધાએ ઢેબરભાઈને બોલાવવા આગ્રહ કર્યો એટલે, ઇચ્છા તો ન હતી છતાં, ઢેબરભાઈને પણ બોલાવવા પડયા.

(નવા દીવાનના પેંતરાઓનો ઇતિહાસ આપતાં સરદારે જણાવ્યું કે) તેણે બહાર પાડેલા છેવટના નિવેદનનો અર્થ એ હતો કે હું આ બધામાં દોરીસંચાર કરી રહ્યો છું. છતાં હું હજી પણ કહું છું કે ગમે તેટલો ઊંચોનીચો થાય તોયે મારા વગર એ કોકડું ઊકલનાર નથી. આ કાંઈ બચ્ચાંના ખેલ નથી. જો પ્રજામાં ભંગાણ પાડવાની કે કડક દમનનીતિ ઉપર આશાઓ બાંધશે તો તેની ૭૨ વર્ષની બધી આબરૂ ગુમાવીને ઘેર જશે. એ આ દેશમાં બહુ મુત્સદ્દીગીરી કરી ગયા છે. પણ હું તો એક ભલો ભોળો ખેડૂત છું અને મારી પાસે તો ઊહુનું એક જ ઓસડ છે. હું મુત્સદ્દી નથી.

જામ સાહેબ દરબાર ભરીને કહે છે કે, તમે એક બાપુને બદલે ૪૦ બાપુ શા માટે માગો છો? પણ બાપુ થવા આવે અને ડફણાં સિવાય કે પ્રજા પર બોજો મૂકયા સિવાય બીજું કશું ન કરે તો શું થાય? જ્યારે મને ખાતરી થશે કે આ રાજકોટના નાટકમાં એમની પણ સલાહ છે ત્યારે કહીશ કે લડવું હોય તો તમે પણ આવી જજો. બધાને આજે હું ફરીથી કહું છું કે જો તમે કોઈ આ લડતમાં વચ્ચે આવ્યા તો આવી બન્યું એમ સમજી લેજો.

નવો દીવાન કહે છે કે અમે રાજકારભારમાં વધારે હિસ્સો આપવા તૈયાર છીએ. પણ અમે એ ગંદવાડામાં હિસ્સો શું કામ

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લઈએ ? અમારે તો જમીન સાફ કરવાની છે. આપણે તો આ તાપને એટલો ધીમો બતાવવો છે કે જેમાંથી એ ગંદવાડો સળગી જાય.

મેં કહેલું છે કે સમાધાન મને પૂછ્યા વિના નહિ થઈ શકે. રાજકોટમાં ત્રાવણકોર જેવું નહિ થવા દઉં. આથી મને કેટલાક આપખુદ કહે છે. ભલે કહે. પણ મારે તો મારું કામ કરવાનું છે તે છે જ. કોઈ કહે છે કે હિટલર છે. હું તો કહું છું કે 'સુપર-હિટલર' કહે તો પણ મારું જે કામ હશે તે તો કરી બતાવવું જ રહ્યું.

[આગળ ચાલતાં તેમણે જણાવ્યું કે] આ લડત એ તો રાજાનાં દિલનાં પરિવર્તન કરવાની છે અને એ ત્યારે થશે કે જ્યારે ચુનંદા માણસો આહુતિ આપવા તૈયાર થશે. રાજકોટનું બાલવૃદ્ધ દરેક પ્રજાજન આજે સમજી ગયું છે કે આ રાજ્યમાં રૈયત થઈને રહેવું તેના કરતાં મરવું એ વધારે સારું છે. રાજકોટનો અવાજ તો આજે હિંદુસ્તાનની પેલી પાર પહોંચવા માંડ્યો છે.

કોઈ દીવાનની તાકાત નથી કે તે પ્રજાની મરજી વિરુદ્ધ કાંઈ કરી શકે. આ વખતે સમાધાની પણ કોણ કરે ? હું કોઈને પણ ચાંદલો કરવા જેવો જોતો નથી. મારે તો આ રાજાને કંકુનો ચાંલ્લો કરવો છે; પણ તેને કાજળનો કરવો હોય ત્યાં શું કરું ? હું તો તેને ઈજ્જત આપવા આવ્યો છું. બાકી બહારનાં એ તો બહારનાં જ રહેવાનાં છે. ૧૯૧૭ ની સાલથી આજ સુધીની બધી લડતોમાં મને કારોબારીઓ બહારનો જ કહેતા હતા. પણ તે બધાય હીંડી ગયા અને આ પણ એ પ્રમાણે હીંડી જવાના છે.

નવા દીવાને મને મળવું તો પડશે જ. એના વિના એને માટે બીજો કાંઈ ઉપાય જ નથી. તે વખતે તેને કહેવાનો છું કે તારા દેશમાં રાજાને શાદી કરવી હોય તો પ્રજાની રજા લેવાય છે, ત્યારે અહીં રાજા એ તો ઈશ્વરી અવતાર છે એવું ક્યાંથી શોધી લાવ્યા ?

જો રાજાઓ કે બીજાઓ રાજ્યો સાથેની 'ટ્રીટી' (સંધિની શરતો) ની વાત કરતા હશે તો હું કહીશ કે તેના તો અનેક ભંગ રાજાઓએ કર્યા છે. અને સંધિ પણ કોની વચ્ચે હોઈ શકે ? સંધિ તો બે આબરૂદાર વચ્ચે હોઈ શકે. જર્મનીએ તો તેના ટુકડા ઉડાવી દીધા એ તો જોયું ?

આપણે તો આજે રાજકોટની પ્રજાને અભિનંદન આપવું જોઈએ અને ઈશ્વરને પ્રાર્થના કરીએ કે તેને જલદી વિજય અપાવે.

મુદ્રક : જીવણજી ડાહ્યાભાઈ દેસાઈ, નવજીવન મુદ્રણાલય, અમદાવાદ
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# ADDRESS

OF

# THE DEWAN OF MYSORE

TO

## THE REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

(BUDGET SESSION)

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TO

## THE REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY
## (BUDGET SESSION)

2nd June, 1936.

MEMBERS OF THE REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY,

SINCE I last had the pleasure of addressing you, we have gone through a period of great sorrows and great changes. In common with the rest of the Empire, and with the whole world, we have mourned the passing of a great and good King, one who, in his modesty, described himself as "a very ordinary man," but who was, in fact, a pattern to all the world of goodness, of statesmanship, of straightforward dealing. His late Majesty was a great ruler and a great gentleman. He knew how to win and to retain the deep love and loyalty of his people, and no personality was more truly honoured in the world's esteem. Introductory.

At home we have to mourn the passing of a member of our own Royal family, the late Princess Cheluvajammanni. I am sure it is the wish of this House that I should convey to His Highness the Maharaja and to His Highness the Yuvaraja our loyal and sincere condolences on the loss of a sister to whom

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they were devotedly attached. We know what her death has meant to His Highness. Our sorrow and our sympathy with him are more than we can express. It is our earnest prayer that Providence may grant him patience and courage in his great loss.

As I have said, we have been through a period of great changes also. This time last year we had to note how, in the office of Secretary of State, one great statesman had been succeeded by another great statesman. This year we find ourselves under a new King, who has already shown an earnestness in respect of everything that is for the good of his people, coupled with a keen determination to look for himself into everything that affects their welfare. I have no doubt that the time is not far distant when these qualities will be similarly displayed in all matters that are for the good of India. Under our new King we have also a new King's Representative, and we welcome in Lord Linlithgow one who is no stranger to India, one who has already given evidence of his keen and practical interest in matters that lie at the root of the ryot's prosperity.

While recording these changes and noting the influence that they are likely to have upon the future of our State with the rest of India, let us, at the same time, thank God that we remain under the wise and beneficent rule of the same Maharaja who, nine years ago, celebrated amid such great rejoicings the completion of a quarter of a century of his reign, and who in little more than a year from to-day will add another decade to that period. His Highness's restoration to health has been a matter for deep rejoicing throughout the State, and it is the earnest prayer of us all that he may long be spared to continue his beneficent activities as a model Ruler.

**The New Standards recommended.**

On a previous occasion I have quoted, though not to this Assembly, from a book which bears the title "The Next Five Years." That book is described by its authors as "An essay in political agreement," "the taking up by a large group of "leaders of thought in many departments of life of

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"the challenge that the present situation offers to "give leadership in organizing a world order freed "from the menace of war, a challenge to develop an "economic system which is freed from poverty and "makes full use of the growing material resources of "the age for the general advantage, and a challenge "to safeguard political liberty and to revitalize "democratic government." I am tempted to quote from that book again, because I find that, in a world in which the old standards are rapidly disappearing or being discredited, it offers a new set of standards which at least have the merit of being clearly defined and of commanding the agreement of a large number of men and women of high talent and undoubted goodwill. I shall confine myself to-day to two brief quotations which seem to me to have a very definite bearing on our budget policy.

"In a time of depression one of the virtues of "public works is that they provide employment; their "remunerativeness shows itself in the decline of unemployment and in the buoyancy of revenue arising "out of the secondary effects in stimulating industry. "Consequently, it is proper in times of depression to "finance works of this nature by raising loans charged "on the general revenue, that is by ordinary Govern-"ment loans."

"Properly conceived, a programme of national "development could be the embodiment of the social "conscience. Looked at from the economic angle, it "should be the outcome of a determination that the "available resources of the nation shall not rot and "waste in idleness merely because profit-making "industry is temporarily unable to find them work "to do. From the social point of view it is a resolve "that some part at least of our efforts shall be con-"sciously directed to the conservation and enrich-"ment of the countryside."

Compared with the policy pursued in Mysore.

I find it somewhat comforting to compare these declarations of a large body of leaders of English thought with some of the declarations of policy that I have been impelled to make in an attempt, with your aid, to steer our way through a decade of

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disturbance and depression. In the first budget which I introduced to you, in June 1926, I made use of the following language:—

"We have all felt the need for the extension of "avenues of employment—particularly for the middle "and poorer classes. This is undoubtedly the most "pressing and the most widely-felt problem to-day. * * * The State will do what it can in this respect "in the various works that are in hand or under "consideration. Such works need not necessarily be "merely utilitarian. They may also be beautiful, "for beauty and order are as necessary to the welfare "of the nation as utility."

In 1927, I followed that statement with the following:—

"Among social problems, perhaps the most "important confronting the Government at the pre-"sent time is that of middle class unemployment. "Not only have palliatives to be found for the present, "but a policy has to be evolved that will steadily tend "to endow the population with capacity to work and "to create avenues of employment in agriculture and "in industries suited to our environment."

In 1928, I suggested that "a courageous as well "as a consistent policy should be pursued in regard "to the manifold activities upon which the State is "engaged, and that we should not hesitate to embark "on new enterprises, industrial, agricultural or irri-"gational, whenever circumstances justify such a "course."

In 1929, I put the matter in another way by saying: "You will thus see that we are in the "position of a company which is steadily increasing "its capital, applying it to legitimate expansion "of revenue-bearing assets."

I am always an optimist, but I hope that I am not over-optimistic in suggesting that the time has at last come when we are emerging from the trough of depression and may hope for a return, if not to abundance, at least to normal conditions. The consumption of commodities is increasing in all directions. Every week one can read of more business

concerns in England and in India which are showing an increase in their profits, and many of which are embarking on new enterprises. Meanwhile, the rate of interest has fallen to a point which we should have hardly believed credible ten, or even five, years ago, and capital is forthcoming in abundance for all who are able to use it profitably. I hope that in these circumstances it is not premature to review very briefly the general results of our pursuit of the policy that I have outlined in the light of the conditions that now obtain.

The results of ten years of this policy.

Our total revenue in 1926-27 was Rs. 338 lakhs, and we estimate that for 1936-37 at Rs. 378 lakhs. Our total debt in 1926-27 was Rs. 274 lakhs, and in 1936-37 it will be Rs. 710 lakhs. Our total payment in interest in 1926-27 was Rs. 19 lakhs, and in 1936-37 it will be Rs. 37 lakhs. Now, the increase in our revenue, as you are aware, has not been obtained by increasing the burdens of the people. On the other hand, the two main items of revenue, land revenue and excise, have shown a very serious fall, and there has been comparatively little increase under the other taxation heads. If the Government were a purely commercial concern, we should be able to say that we had increased our capital by Rs. 436 lakhs and had increased our profits by Rs. 40 lakhs. If we consider the matter again from the point of view of assets and liabilities, you will, I think, come to a similar conclusion.

Under irrigation we have erected works which have brought an additional 1,15,800 acres under cultivation in the last ten years, much of it being land that was incapable of bearing a crop without water, and which will enable us in a very short time to extend the irrigation to another similar area.

In Railways, by redeeming the debt on it, we have, to all intents and purposes, bought back for the State the important Bangalore-Harihar link.

Under electrical enterprises, we have provided works which are capable of generating 200,754,040 units or 30,720 horse power, and we have a ready sale, not only for that amount of power, but for as much more as we can produce.

To take one more instance, in the Sugar Factory, we have an asset of a capital value of Rs. 20 lakhs, and we and the other shareholders could at the current market price sell our shares in it for at least $2\frac{1}{2}$ times the amount we have spent. I will not go into further particulars because I shall be dealing shortly at somewhat greater length with these enterprises.

The effec. on unemployment.

But there is one more point to which I should like to draw your attention. And that is the influence of this programme upon the question of employment. We have not only given employment in the building of the works, but that in itself has given secondary employment in the preparation of bricks, stone and timber and other materials. We have again, wherever opportunity offered, given employment through the making of our own accessories for our enterprises instead of importing them, as in the case of electrical goods and appliances and porcelainware, to which we hope shortly to add cement. We have even developed trade in shipping building materials, in the shape of granite, to other countries. Again, every one of these enterprises once started has given further employment to the people who manufacture the goods, and thus, I think I may say, has helped to create a spirit of enterprise and enquiry which we shall very badly need in times to come.

While, therefore, I should be the last to disregard the great amount of unemployment that still exists among the educated classes, I do feel that we are entitled to congratulate one another on the extent of the progress that we have been able to make in the last ten years. And I should like to take this opportunity of thanking you for the steadfast courage with which you have supported me, in spite of apprehensions from time to time, in the pursuit of the policy which has brought about these results.

## The Revised Estimate and the Budget.

**General results for 1935-36**

I will now turn to some more details about our budget. In so doing, I propose to repeat the procedure of last year, dividing up our revenues very

roughly into three categories, namely, first the endowments of Nature, secondly, the State's commercial enterprises, and thirdly, the contributions of the tax-payer.

**and anticipations for 1936-37.**

**Mining revenue.**

Our mining enterprises have again been very good to us. The revenue from royalty on gold amounts to Rs. 26 lakhs in the year 1935-36 as against Rs. 25·04 lakhs last year. In addition to this, the income-tax derived from the mines amounts to Rs. 14·55 lakhs against Rs. 15·16 lakhs last year. In chrome we have a revenue of Rs. 30,000 this year, as against Rs. 1·10 lakhs in 1934-35. And the net profit on sales of securities, owing to the magnitude of the transactions involved, amounts to no less than Rs. 20·42 lakhs.

## Industries.

**Commercial enterprises.**

I propose to deal with the enterprises that fall roughly into the category of commercial enterprises, as I did last year, in the order of the amount of capital involved, which is as follows:—

1. The Krishnaraj Sagar Hydro-Electric and Irrigation Works.
2. The Mysore Railways.
3. The Mysore Iron and Steel Works.
4. The Mysore Sugar Factory.
5. The Chamaraja Waterworks.
6. The Sandalwood Oil Factory.
7. The Soap Factory.
8. The Silk Industry.
9. The Central Industrial Workshop.
10. The Tobacco Industry.
11. The Porcelain Factory.
12. The Government Electric Factory.
13. The Industrial Testing Laboratory.
14. Cottage Industries.

**Krishnaraj Sagar and Hydro-Electric Works.**

These Works now represent a total investment of Rs. 523·47 lakhs. I told you last year that we had been disappointed in the return which the irrigation works had then given, but expressed the hope that we would shortly get over this difficulty. That hope has already been to a great extent fulfilled. As against a total of 56,000 acres for which water has been made available, an aggregate extent of 41,300 is

now under irrigation. It is expected that this will soon go up to 50,000, and the Deputy Commissioner anticipates a realisation of Rs. 2,55,400 under water rate under the Irwin Canal in the year 1936-37. In addition to this, the ryots who were hitherto holding back have been coming forward to execute *mutchalikas* in respect of land under the portion of the Cauvery branch on which work has been suspended, so that 6,600 acres have already been accounted for out of the total of 8,200 acres which has yet to be brought under irrigation. Accordingly, the Krishnaraj Sagar Working Committee have recommended the resumption of the works, and the matter is now under consideration. Among other projects in this direction that are being considered is one for expanding irrigation by pick-up channels in the same tract.

The demand for electricity is increasing to such an extent that the Department considers that it is necessary to have a continuous supply of 1,200 cusecs at Sivasamudram, as against the agreed maximum discharge of 900 cusecs from the storage in the Reservoir. This question has been investigated by an expert committee who have recommended immediate steps being taken to raise the storage from 120′ to 124′. This, of course, means the submersion of an additional area which is estimated to cost Rs. 3 lakhs. This scheme has been sanctioned by Government. To meet immediate requirements, Government have decided upon the construction of an additional unit for providing 8,000 H. P. at a cost of Rs. 11 lakhs.

Railways.

I have already referred to the important financial event involved in the discharge of the 4 per cent M. & S.M. Railway debenture loan for £1,200,000. The necessary arrangements are now being made to take over the lines from the M. & S.M. Railway Company with effect from 1st January, 1938. When this transfer is completed the total length of miles of the Mysore Railways will amount to 721·66 and the whole undertaking will compare favourably in magnitude with some of the Railways ranked as

railways of the first class. Among other developments that are necessary in view of this great expansion of the enterprise is the construction of a Railway Central Office capable of accommodating the whole of the increased staff, and Government have sanctioned the construction of such an office at Mysore at a cost of Rs. 5½ lakhs. Meanwhile, the extension of the Shimoga-Anandapur Railway in the direction of Sagar continues and a total amount of Rs. 3 lakhs has been sanctioned by Government during the year and Rs. 4 lakhs for the next year. In the same connection, and in order to meet the menace of bus competition, Government have sanctioned a scheme for running motor buses, and have started a service from Shimoga to Sagar in the first instance. The capital cost incurred on this scheme is Rs. 34,000, and the earnings so far are satisfactory.

**Mysore Iron and Steel Works.**

The Mysore Iron and Steel Works have shared in the return to prosperity which has been enjoyed by similar works in England and elsewhere. Already, before the steel plant was in operation, the Iron Works had given us an agreeable surprise by earning a working profit on the manufacture of their original products. In the coming year, as a result of increasing demand and rise in prices, coupled with some reduction in cost, due to very efficient management, and the addition of the steel plant, it is hoped that they will yield a profit of Rs. 3 lakhs. This profit will be transferred to the Depreciation Fund, to which no contribution has so far been possible.

**Mysore Sugar Factory.**

The progress of the Sugar Factory is well known to you all. It yielded a profit of 11¼ per cent in 1935-36, and it is hoped that it will yield a much larger profit for shareholders in the coming years. It must not be forgotten that every rupee of profit that goes to them is accompanied by a corresponding payment to the ryot as price for his sugar-cane. And not only that, there is also the yield to Government under the head of Sugar Excise Duty, which in the year 1935-36 was Rs. 4·70 lakhs and for the coming year is expected to be Rs. 5·20 lakhs.

**Chamaraja Waterworks.**

The Chamaraja Waterworks have, as I said last year, been disappointing from a purely commercial point of view. Steps, however, have been taken to increase the revenue by making arrangements for the supply of water at commercial rates, to the Bangalore Woollen, Cotton and Silk Mills and other large consumers, and it is hoped that, as the years go on, and other developments of a similar kind are made, the Works may show a better return on the capital invested.

**Sandal Oil Factory.**

The depression in the sandal oil trade continued, and there has not been much change in the demand and prices. Arrangements for the distillation of Mysore sandalwood in Kanauj have been discontinued with effect from 1st February, and the requirements throughout India are now being met by the Mysore Factory.

**Soap Factory.**

The output and sales of soaps and other products of the Government Soap Factory showed a slight improvement, and their popularity has been maintained in spite of the competition which the factory has had to face. The factory had to reduce its selling rates in sympathy with the market and this has resulted, in spite of increased sales, in the net profits being reduced to about Rs. 40,000.

**The Silk Industry.**

The present condition of sericulture continues to be a source of great anxiety to Government, although there have been some signs of a slight recovery in the last few months. Continuous action is being taken to stimulate mulberry cultivation and increase the supply of disease-free eggs. Two additional grainages were opened during the current year, and provision has also been made for opening new Government and aided grainages during the next year.

Silk-waste was once an important source of subsidiary revenue to the reeler, but the prices obtained have steadily fallen, and latterly there has been no demand. To help the sericulturists, Government have sanctioned a scheme for starting a Silk-waste Spinning Factory on a joint-stock basis. The factory will have three thousand spindles and a capacity of about 80,000 lbs. of spun yarn a year, and its

prospects have been considerably improved by the imposition of an additional duty of 14 annas a lb. on imports of spun silk. You have all doubtless seen the prospectus of the new company, and I hope that many of you will soon be shareholders in it.

The demand for the products of the Silk-Weaving Factory continued to be keen, but here again much competition was encountered, and had to be met by a reduction of prices and a constant search for newer and more attractive designs of such goods as handkerchiefs, ties, and lace-bordered saris.

Central Industrial Workshop.

Government have issued orders on the recommendations of the committee appointed to enquire into the working of the Central Industrial Workshop. Sanction has been accorded to the purchase of additional plant at a cost of about Rs. 40,000 and to the writing off of much worn-out and obsolete plant. An important order obtained during the year was that for Calyx drill equipment for well-boring supplied to the Pudukottah State.

Tobacco.

Another scheme which is full of promise, as providing a subsidiary money crop to our agriculturists, is the cultivation of Virginian tobacco and its curing in barns. During the last year experiments were carried on in the Whitefield area on a small scale, but owing to the unfavourable seasonal conditions and the preliminary difficulties incidental to the starting of a scheme of this nature, the operations resulted in a small loss. The experience gained has, however, been of great value, and justifies, in the opinion of the officers concerned, the continuance of the work at Whitefield as a regular commercial proposition. At the same time, it is proposed to take up the work on an experimental basis in new areas, such as, Goribidnur, Hunsur, Mandya, Periyapatna and Babbur. It is gratifying to learn that the department has received offers for the purchase of the whole output with a guarantee of indemnity against loss. I may add that a batch of seventeen pupils has recently been sent to Guntur and trained in barn-curing and allied work.

**The Porcelain Factory.** The services of an expert have been secured for the Government Porcelain Factory and there has been an improvement in both the production and sales. Additional buildings and plant are under erection.

**The Electric Factory.** During the last two years work on an experimental basis has been carried on in the manufacture of electrical accessories and allied products, and a sum of Rs. 70,000 has recently been sanctioned by Government for the establishment of a regular factory in the old distillery buildings. Facilities have also been afforded to a firm who were manufacturing electric accumulators in Bombay, and they have reorganised their concern and formed a joint-stock company which will work in the same premises.

**The Industrial and Testing Laboratory.** The total value of medicines manufactured in the Laboratory during the year came to Rs. 65,000. The Government Lac Factory was taken under the same control, and special attention is being given to the improvement of the quality and colour of the button lac and shellac and to the manufacture of new products. A scheme for the manufacture of bitumen emulsion for surfacing roads was sanctioned by Government, involving a total outlay of Rs. 39,855. Necessary plant and equipment with a capacity of about 1,000 gallons a day was erected at the premises of the Laboratory, and 1,07,000 gallons valued at Rs. 44,000 have so far been supplied to the Public Works Department. It is under contemplation to instal a similar plant at Mysore.

**Cottage Industries.** During the year under report an improved type of loom was designed and its working was demonstrated in several places in and outside the State. The looms received special recognition at the Exhibitions at Patna and Delhi. It is now proposed to undertake the manufacture of the same on a large scale so as to bring it within easy reach of the weavers. The working of the Weavers' Co-operative Society at Bangalore was examined and the Society was reconstituted with an enlarged directorate. Special accommodation has been given to the Society by the Apex Bank, and a Government subvention of

Rs. 100 a month has been sanctioned for one year to meet the rent and office expenses. Detailed investigations into the lacquerware industry at Channapatna were made with a view to regulating the competition between the local merchants and artisans, which has been responsible for a severe fall in prices. The introduction of new designs and of improved appliances is also receiving attention. The other cottage industries to which attention is being paid by the Industrial Department are bee-keeping, the manufacture of glue, leather goods, improvements in village *ganas* and coir ropes and mat-making.

New Industries.

I cannot conclude this review of our commercial enterprises without referring to some important enterprises that are still in embryo. I have already referred to the scheme for a Silk-waste Spinning Factory.

Cement.

The next important enterprise we are taking up is the making of cement. This is a matter that has been under the consideration of Government for some years, and recently, the Board of Industries and Commerce recommended that a plant for the manufacture of 60 tons a day of high grade portland cement be installed. There are considerable advantages in establishing this plant at Bhadravati, not only because all the raw materials are available within economic distance, but also because the engineering and other facilities furnished by the Iron and Steel Works can be utilised and the capital outlay kept down. Orders for the plant and machinery will be placed at a very early date. Arrangements have also been made for the engagement of a manager with experience of the industry in India. I am aware that there was a strong feeling among the public that the scheme should be organised on the basis of a private limited company supported by Government, but this was not found practicable as the operations will be, as I have already indicated, very closely linked up with those of the Iron and Steel Works.

Paper.

Bhadravati will also form the centre of another important industry. I refer to the manufacture of pulp and paper. It is unnecessary for me to go into

the details of this scheme as you have all doubtless read the prospectus of the company. To ensure the successful establishment of this industry, Government have given very valuable concessions, and the keen demand for the shares of the company from all classes of investors shows that the factory supplies a real need in the economy of South India.

Direction of the combined concerns at Bhadravati.

You will have noticed from the prospectus that one of the conditions prescribed by Government is that the Chairman and Managing Director of the Paper Mills should be nominated by Government, and it is our intention that the Chairman of the Board of Management of the Mysore Iron and Steel Works should also be the Chairman and Managing Director of the Paper Mills, as this arrangement is calculated to ensure the smooth working of the two concerns.

At the same time, we cannot but recognize that the addition of the manufacture, distribution and sale of steel, cement and paper, to those of iron goods must throw a very heavy additional burden upon the Chairman of the combined concerns, and that it would not be fair to expect a non-official, however able, to undertake this onerous work. Government have accordingly come to the conclusion that it is necessary to appoint an officer who will be able to devote his whole time to the work of Chairman and Managing Director of these important concerns. They have, therefore, reluctantly decided to accept the resignation by Diwan Bahadur, Rajamantrapravina Mr. K. Matthan of the offices of Chairman of the Mysore Iron and Steel Works and the New Paper Mills, and to appoint a senior officer of Government with experience of industrial management as Chairman; the new arrangement will come into effect from 1st August, 1936. Mr. Matthan has done much work in settling the preliminary details of the new concerns, and Government appreciate very highly his valuable services even after retirement, and you will all be glad to learn that he will continue to be associated with the Sugar Company as its Chairman and Managing Director.

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Arrangements for sale.

Lastly, you are all well aware of the truism that it is useless to manufacture goods unless you have a fully equipped agency for advertising and selling them, and you will find that we have been active in the year in this respect also. We have conducted marketing surveys, in collaboration with the staff of the Government of India, in respect of rice, wheat, groundnuts, linseed, tobacco, fruit, eggs, milk, cattle, hides and skins. It is proposed next year to conduct similar surveys in respect of coffee, cocoanut and copra, and to recruit and train two probationers for this work.

I think you will find that the virtues of our goods have been prominently set forth in most of the leading newspapers in India, as well as in several of those in England. I would invite your attention particularly to the special Mysore Number that has just appeared as a supplement to the journal entitled 'Great Britain and the East'.

While the Trade Commissioner's Office in London continues to expand its activities, we have, with a view to improving the sales of our products in Bombay and to facilitate an intensive propaganda being carried on, organized a Mysore Emporium in Bombay, which was opened on the 14th April, 1936. Sir Chunilal Mehta very kindly performed the opening ceremony. The Emporium makes an effective display of the products of the Government factories, and it is gratifying to find that private manufacturers are also taking advantage of this facility. In addition to this, all the State factories participated in several exhibitions, and our goods have won appreciation wherever they were exhibited.

Taxation—The Road Fund.

Before dealing with the contribution of the tax-payer, I should like to mention a circumstance that has necessitated some changes in the classification of our accounts, that is, the introduction of the Road Fund. A new fund head has been opened to which are credited the entire receipts from tolls, motor license fees, etc., (now appearing under XIX A. Communications,) the usual grant for roads and the grant of the Government of India from Petrol Tax

Revenue. The cost of collection and administration of the taxes, the incidental expenses of the Traffic Board and the expenditure incurred by the Public Works Department in connection with the roads will be met from this Fund. The effect of the above change in classification is a decrease of about Rs. 6 lakhs under "Total Revenue" and a similar decrease under "Total Expenditure charged to Revenue," and this has to be kept in view in making comparisons.

**Contribution of the tax-payer—Land Revenue.**

Coming now to the contribution of the taxpayer, the seasonal conditions, which were unfavourable in 1934-35, continued so until the middle of August last year, but the rains of August and the subsequent months eased the situation considerably. Many tanks which had almost dried up received a good supply of water, and the agricultural operations were good. The rainfall during the year was satisfactory, and it is hoped that the approaching monsoon will bring conditions favourable to the agriculturist. As a result of the favourable seasonal conditions, the acreage under the two staple crops, ragi and paddy, increased from 21,14,203 and 679,809 to 22,04,798 and 740,994, respectively. The percentage of collections up to the end of March, 1936 showed an improvement from 17·7 to 21·03.

Excise.

In the case of Excise, I regret to report a further fall, making a total fall in the past ten years of Rs. 15½ lakhs or about 24 per cent. If I could believe that even a major part of this decline in revenue was accompanied by a corresponding decline in consumption, I should be satisfied, but believing as we do that it is very largely due to an increase in illicit practices and to the fact that money which should go into the coffers of Government is going into the pockets of the middlemen, we will not rest content until we see an improvement.

**Stamps, Registration and Income-tax.**

There has been a welcome improvement under "Stamps, Registration and Income-tax," indicating a recovery in general trade conditions.

Under Miscellaneous Taxes, I have already referred to the increase of Rs. 1·55 lakhs in the Sugar Excise Duty, owing to an increase of output in

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the Sugar Factory. A new item of revenue is Rs. 29,000 received this year, and Rs. 40,000 to be received next year from the recipients of prospecting licenses for gold. At the same time, an increase in the profits of the companies and the fact that the Champion Reef Gold Mining Company are making a large increase in their capital lead one to hope that there will be an increase in the payments in royalties.

## Expenditure.

The salary cut.

Turning now to the Expenditure heads, I am in the first place very glad to be able to say that we have at last found ourselves in a position to restore the emergency reduction in the salaries of Government employees. This reduction has now been in force for a matter of five years, and has involved a very heavy strain on the finances of a body of very deserving public servants. This measure involves an extra provision of Rs. 2 lakhs, but some savings, due to the revision of scales of pay effected in 1934-35, are expected to be realised during the next year, with the result that there will be no appreciable increase in the total provision.

Public Works.

Of the other principal changes on the expenditure side, there is, in the first place, an increase of about Rs. 4 lakhs in Public Works during the current year, which has been necessitated by the rapid progress made with a large number of buildings and irrigation works, and by the higher standard of road maintenance required by modern conditions.

I give below a list of the more important works which have been recently taken up or completed :—

(1) The McGann Hospital, Shimoga, and the Chennagiri Ramanna Setty Out-patient Dispensary attached to the Hospital. These have been completed and taken over by the Medical Department.

(2) The new Mental Hospital which is proposed to be built on a site to the east of the Lalbagh. The estimated cost is Rs. 2,11,700.

(3) An Obstetrics Block attached to the Vani Vilas Hospital at Bangalore. Estimated cost,

Rs. 63,000. Dharmaprakasha Mr. Sajjan Rao of Bangalore has generously undertaken to bear the entire cost.

(4) A new building for holding the annual Dassara Exhibition at Mysore. Estimated cost, Rs. 1½ lakhs. A portion only is being built this year at an estimated cost of Rs. 55,000. It is hoped to complete the building in the following year.

(5) Quarters for the constables and officers of the Police Department at Bangalore and Davangere at a cost of Rs. 25,000.

(6) A new hospital at Kolar, estimated to cost Rs. 85,000, of which a sum of Rs. 63,000 has been received from private donors and from the Silver Jubilee Fund and local bodies, the balance being met by Government.

(7) New Railway Offices at Mysore at a cost of Rs. 5½ lakhs.

(8) Buildings for Telephone Exchanges at Mysore and Bangalore at a total cost of about Rs. 1 lakh.

(9) A new block for the Mechanical Engineering School at Bangalore, costing Rs. 44,500.

(10) The Vani Vilas Bridge at T.-Narsipur—completed.

(11) A motor road to Nandi Hill, costing Rs. 35,000.

(12) A bridge at Ramanathapur at an estimated cost of Rs. 2·75 lakhs—1·25 lakhs from the Road Reserve Fund of the Government of India, and the balance from the District Board.

An additional grant of Rs. 1½ lakhs has been sanctioned for effecting improvements on a self-supporting basis, without incurring any charges on the Government, near the Kumbargundi Road, Bangalore, which it is hoped, will improve the sanitary condition of the area and also greatly add to its beauty.

**Mysore University.** It is proposed to raise the grant to the Mysore University from Rs. 9·10 to Rs. 10 lakhs in order to meet the extra expenditure due to the restoration of salary cuts, the revision of the scales of pay of

the teaching staff and the cost of certain building works.

**Grants for Local Improvements.**

The grant for improvement of water supply in towns has been raised from Rs. 45,000 to Rs. 55,000, and special provision has been made for the opening of new medical and veterinary dispensaries and for the expansion of primary education.

**Telephones.**

In order to meet the increasing demands of the public for telephone accommodation, both in Bangalore and Mysore, a scheme costing Rs. 6 lakhs has been sanctioned. This provides initially for 500 telephones in Bangalore and 300 in Mysore, against 200 and 100 now in existence, with facilities for eventually expanding the number to 2,000 in Bangalore and 600 in Mysore. Arrangements will also be made to connect our exchanges with the trunk telephone system of India.

**Capital Works.**

As regards Capital Works, I have an important new development to report to you, namely, the placing of a 3 per cent loan 'on tap' at a premium of Re. 1, which has since been raised to Rs. 1-4-0, for the purpose of taking advantage of the cheap money rates now prevailing with a view to expanding the revenue realised from remunerative works. It is a specific condition of this loan that none of the money is to be employed except on remunerative works, and that the loan is to be closed directly as much money as can be expended on such works has been subscribed. The subscriptions up to date amount to Rs. 45 lakhs, and the following is the list of the works which it is, so far, proposed to undertake out of the loan.

| | Rs. in lakhs |
|---|---|
| Works for the generation of electrical power ... | 11·00 |
| Expansion of the Electric Factory ... | 1·70 |
| Expansion of the telephone system ... | 6·00 |
| ~~Electrification of Davangere ... ...~~ | ~~8·00~~ |
| Cement Factory ... ... ... | 5·50 |
| Acquisition of lands under Krishnaraj Sagar in connection with the development of power and irrigation. | 3·00 |
| Loan to Mysore City Municipality ... | 4·00 |
| Shares in new Paper Mills ... ... | 2·50 |
| Shares in the new Mysore Spun Silk Mills ... | ·85 |
| Total ... | 42·55 |

In the net result we close our accounts for 1935-36 with a balance on hand of Rs. 96·29 lakhs. The revenue expected to be realized in 1936-37 is Rs. 378·72 lakhs, after transferring about Rs. 7 lakhs to the Road Fund. The figures for expenditure are Rs. 376·72 lakhs as against Rs. 377·58 lakhs for the current year, and we hope to close the year with a favourable balance of Rs. 2 lakhs.

Unemployment.

I have referred in the earlier paragraphs to the question of unemployment. A weighty contribution to the solution of the problem of middle class unemployment in India has, undoubtedly, been the Report of the Unemployment Committee of the United Provinces presided over by that distinguished countryman of ours, the Rt. Hon. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. The recommendations of the Committee are, for the most part, based on the conditions obtaining in the United Provinces, but they are indeed of much wider application and significance; and even apart from the specific recommendations, the Report itself embodies several suggestions of great value which, if properly followed, may lead to useful developments.

I have had the Report carefully examined and analysed in the Secretariat with a view to seeing how far the recommendations of the Sapru Committee could, with necessary changes, be adopted in our own State. The opinions of the Heads of Departments have also been obtained on the various suggestions in the Report. Copies of the review with the notes will be supplied to the members of the Assembly for their information.

In passing, I may be permitted to make one observation. As you know, the problem of unemployment is facing almost all countries in different degrees. In India itself, with which we are immediately concerned, it is being tackled by different Provinces in different ways. I have tried to indicate to you briefly, in the course of my address as well as in the notes on the Sapru Report, what we in Mysore have done and are doing in this direction.

Conclusion.

While I trust that you will regard as satisfactory, not only the figures for the two years under

consideration, but the general results of our transactions for the past ten years, which I have endeavoured to describe to you, I do not conceal from myself the fact that the times are critical and fraught with danger. Though we live in a corner of the world, we cannot be unconcerned with what is happening outside that corner. World affairs are in an appalling state. It is a world of ferment and conflicting ideas. The news of the day is filled with instances of outrageous breaches of faith, disregard of pledges, and avoidance of promises made in semblance of honour. Treaties, covenants, and agreements have been smashed the world over, and each instance of bad faith has brought contracting nations to war or to the verge of it. One is tempted to lose all faith in treaties, when so often their observance lasts only so long as they coincide with the interests of the contracting nation. Yet the one hope for us all is resolutely to keep our faith in human nature, and in that will towards peace and unity which we know is powerful even now among the people of the nations.

The present state of Europe offers a sad commentary on Western civilisation. Humanity owes a great deal to Europe. It would be no exaggeration to say that almost all its recent wonderful progress in Science and Art is due to Europe. It has been the creator of modern civilisation. It cannot be its destroyer too!

There seems little hope for the world unless the peace of Europe is achieved, and it will not be achieved, unless a just settlement of all pending issues takes place, unless all real grievances are redressed, and unless there is, at least, a sincere desire on the part of the various governments to settle them in a spirit of goodwill and justice. For no settlement can endure unless it is based on a foundation of right.

The state of Europe is a matter which concerns India very deeply. The world is getting smaller and smaller, thanks to the great advance which science is making in the annihilation of distances. If there should be a conflict in Europe, Britain is almost

certain to be involved in it and this will inevitably bring India also into the vortex. Who can prophesy the results of a conflagration of such a magnitude and foretell what the fate of India might be, defenceless as she is and incapable of offering any resistance, especially to an invader from the sea?

Britain, whose chief interest is peace, is striving might and main to evolve a satisfactory solution of a most perplexing problem. Let us wish her success in her search for peace.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in the grim light of present realities, how petty our differences appear, how insignificant the racial or religious barriers that separate us. Instead of standing shoulder to shoulder in the service of a common Motherland, we are perpetually quarrelling with one another over things that are of no real value either in this world or, I am sure, in the next. We hear talk of communism. We hear praise of Bolshevism from the lips of persons who should know better. Let us be more practical. Let us be more discerning. Let the bonds of a common aspiration unite us all together—Hindus and Muslims and Christians—British India and the States. It is only then that a new India will arise. It is only then that we can, in the memorable words of the Viceroy, who deserves our fullest co-operation, "move boldly forward with faith and courage," and "sustain in all its ancient fame and glory, the great name of India over all the world."

MYSORE,
*2nd June 1936.*

MIRZA M. ISMAIL,
*Dewan of Mysore.*

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# LAWLESS LIMBDI

With a Foreword

by

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Let the people of Limbdi be prepared for endless suffering and victory is theirs.

— Mahatma Gandhi.

Published by
Secretaries
All India States' People's Conference

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# LAWLESS LIMBDI

## WITH A FOREWARD

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## Sardar Vallabhabhai Patel

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***—Mahatma Gandhi***

***Published by***

**Secretaries**

**All India States' People's Conference**

# LAWLESS LIMBDI

## WITH A FOREWARD

by

## Sardar Vallabhabhai Patel

**Limbdi has out-amritsared Amritsar by continuous programmes of unabashed confiscation of property and barefaced attrocities. Trust Limbdi people will bear persecution with fortitude. Sure, they will emerge victorious.**

—*Pattabhi Sitaramaiyya*

*Published by*
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**138, Medows Street, Fort, Bombay.**

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# UNPRECEDENTED ATROCITIES

"But they (people of Limbdi) have now discovered that he (Yuvraj) has imbibed some curious notions of the dictatorship of the west....Perhaps nowhere has the policy of ruthlessness been pursued with so much precision and persistence as in Limbdi".

—MAHATMA GANDHI.

* * *

"Limbdi has become symbolic of a new technique on the part of some of the rulers. This is a technique of the state encouraging gangsterism, dacoity and brutal violence by private individuals or hirelings....But what shall we say to the state which itself encourages this disgusting brutality and gangsterism? What shall we say of Limbdi which has exhibited this? We have much to say and words are feeble vehicle for our thoughts but we shall say it in other and more effective ways when time comes."

—PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU.

* * *

"But Limbdi has improved upon the Rajkot methods of barbarism and brutality......There is no safety of person or property in Limbdi State."

—SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL.

* * *

"They must be extraordinary dacoits, indeed, who have declared a vendetta against the Praja Mandal......From the testimony of these persons and several others the suspicion naturally arises, that the goondas were the tools of some unscrupulous officials."

—"BOMBAY CHRONICLE"

* * *

"Our contention is that the Darbar is the organiser of the goondaism. Assuming, that the Darbar is innocent, he cannot plead lack of previous knowledge of the probability of violence, since it paraded the threat of violence by loyalists, in a communique. The Darbar is, therefore, either the principal or an accessory to the offence before and after its occurence".

—"FREE PRESS JOURNAL"

* * *

"That inspite of the fact that he knew that attempts would be made to break up the Parishad he did nothing to prevent the mischief, is eloquent of the inspiration behind this exhibition of goondaism. What has the paramount power to say about hooliganism instigated and encouraged by the State administration from which the sufferers are the people of the State?"

—"THE HINDUSTAN TIMES"

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# FOREWORD

Limbdi is a small principality in Kathiawar. Kathiawar itself is a small peninsula on the west coast of India and contains no less than 283 out of the 584 States which together with British Indian Provinces constitute India. The area of 109 out of these 283 little States is from 10 to 100 sq. miles, of 116 is from 1 to 10 sq. miles and of 22 is even less than 1 sq. mile. 242 of these States have a population of less than 10,000 souls; 218 less than 5,000; 127 less than 1000 and 31 less than 200. Again 239 of these States have an annual revenue of less than Rs. 1,00,000/-. Out of these, 199 have an annual revenue of less than Rs. 50,000/-; 141 of less than Rs. 20,000/-, and a fair number out of these of only a thousand or two.

In area Kathiawar is less than fiftieth of the whole country. In this area, 1.1 per cent of Indians are governed by 283 Ruling Chiefs, each of whom exercises 'sovereignty' over his slice of territory subject only to orders, politely termed 'advice' of the Agent to the Crown Representative as representing the Paramount Power. Everyone of these Chiefs, small and large, claims to exercise power in varying degree over his subjects and is the master of whatever he can extract out of their helplessness. Freedom of speech, press and association simply does not exist. Except in a few big States there are no Courts of Law worth the name. In the States in which Courts of Law are set up, both the existence and the freedom of the judiciary depend upon the rulers' pleasure. So far no serious attempt has been made by the Paramount Power to see that the rule of law governs the relations of the Chief with his subjects. There is no Supreme Court of Justice to which the injured and the innocent can resort to vindicate justice or civil liberty.

The events described in this booklet occurred in the year 1938-39 in Limbdi, one of the States in Kathiawar. Limbdi has an area of 343.96 square miles, a population of 40,688 souls, and an average annual revenue of Rs. 9,00,000. The incidence of taxation per capita in this poor State therefore is Rs. 22.5 as against Rs. 7.5 for the Province of Bombay and Rs. 6.5 for the whole of India. The present Ruler is old and has retired into obscurity leaving the governance of his State in the hands of the Heir Apparent.

The Thakoresahib, like all other Ruling Chiefs of Indian States, is maintained in his despotic authority over his subjects by the Crown Representative as representing the Paramount Power. If the protection of the British Government is withdrawn, these autocrats would soon find their very existence precarious. At the same time, so long as the unlimited resources of the British Government continue to be placed at their disposal, their subjects would be at their mercy in any struggle which they may carry on against State oppression. In the result, therefore, the responsibility for suppressing movements for democratic freedom in Indian States, lies at the door of the Paramount Power.

# FOREWORD

The Paramount Power supports the Ruler against his people under what are called treaty obligations. If the treaties with the States of Kathiawar are examined it would be found that most of them are taken by way of security for good behaviour from the original Chiefs. Limbdi is an instance in point. In 1807 a bond was taken from the then Ruler of Limbdi for securing the peace of the country and for the protection of the possessions of the British. Aitchison sets out this Security Bond at page 16 of his Treaties Vol. VI. The following passages from the Bond are illuminating:—

"That I will not have a feud with any other (Talukdar), nor will I harbour the outlaw of any other (Talukdar) whether Kathi or Rajput, nor will incite any other person to commit any act of violance."........

"I will not plunder in the Taluka of any other (Chief) nor on the high-road. I agree to act as has been the custom hitherto. I will not harbour thieves in my limits, but if I keep in my country, it shall be under proper precautions."........

"I will not associate with any delinquent or criminal of Government whether one of the Shrimant Sena Khas Khel Saheb, or of the Company Saheb's Government."........

"On both sides of us are situated the Mahals of the Shrimant Pant Pradhan, and the Gaekwar Government, and also those of the Government of the Honourable Company. In these Mahals I will not commit any robberies or make any plundering incursions, nor will I, in any way, molest any merchant or traveller, but will supply them with labourers, guards and porters and thus escort them beyond my frontier."........

"I make Jhala Amarsinghji of Halvad Dhrangadhra, the counter-security for this; and execute the deed."........

"written by Jhala Shri Amarsinghji, I have become counter-security and will fulfil and cause to be observed that which has been written above."

It is, a noteworthy commentary on the present attitude of the Paramount Power towards the States like Limbdi that though the events described in this booklet happened under the very eyes of the Agent to the Crown Representative at Rajkot and though the whole of Indian press in Western India was full of indignant protests against the ruler, not one step was taken to inquire into these charges or to hold the Thakoresahib to his bond of good behaviour or to vindicate the claims of paramountcy by compelling the Thakoresahib to respect the life and Liberty of his subjects. The responsibility for these happenings is, therefore, not only of the Thakoresahib but in the ultimate analysis rests with the Parliament of Britain, which, while claiming to speak in the name of democracy, permits the grossest form of medieval autocracy to flourish in India and places the life and liberty of hapless individuals at the mercy of little despots.

The booklet speaks for itself. It is based on the direct testimony of unimpeachable witnesses. The authors are ready and able to prove the facts set out here, but for reasons which I need not go into here, it suits the Paramount Power to offer the blind eye to such exploits of these Chiefs, who regard themselves as immune from the consequences of

internal maladministration so long as they continue to offer professions of loyalty to the Paramount Power and, when need arises, offer generous contributio n to the war-chest of Britain,—a gesture which is fulfilled by extracting the last penny out of a poor and down trodden peasantry.

Unfortunately Limbdi is not a solitary instance in which the Paramount Power ignores its fundamental duties towards the people in the States. The treatment given out to the Thakoresahib is a part of the wider policy to see that even the elementary struggle for democracy in the States is suppressed.

It is a tragedy of modern life that the agents of a Democracy which claims to fight for the world's freedom, not only tolerate such conditions but by deliberate acquiesance or culpable indifference strengthen such authority against the efforts of National India to introduce even the smallest element of popular control in the governance of the States. If this book awakens the conscience of those who believe in democracy in any part of the world, the effort of the authors would have been amply repaid.

19th November 1939. *Vallabhbhai Patel.*

# INTRODUCTION

THE small State of Limbdi in Kathiawar has suddenly become notorious. The Yuvaraj of Limbdi has outdone Nazism and devised novel methods of terrorism and repression to crush the popular movement. The Royal family of Limbdi had the reputation of being an educated and cultured family. That mask has been rent asunder by the events of the last 10 months, which have disclosed the naked autocracy and barbarism underlying it.

The Yuvaraj began by professing sympathy for the freedom movement. He hoped to win over the workers by tall talk and grandiose schemes. The workers however were not slow to see the implications of the scheme which would have resulted in the regimentation of life and greater economic slavery of the peasantry and the introduction of the communal poison in the life of the people. The Praja Mandal declared that it had no intention to start any movement for direct action. Its only object was to go to the villages, and educate the people and establish contact with them. The simple issue was one of civil liberty, *viz.*, freedom of speech and association. The Yuvaraj would not concede any such right. His order was, "you shan't touch my villages."

The workers, however, remained firm. The State had not the courage to act legally. It issued no prohibitory orders, banned no meetings and arrested no worker. It adopted novel methods to terrorise the people and repress the movement. The repression began by threats and intimidation, and gradually there followed assaults on workers and all those who sympathised with the Praja Mandal, thefts and robberies of the property of those who sympathised or were suspected to sympathise with the Praja Mandal, organised dacoities, and ultimately the repetition of the Jalianwalla Baug tragedy on 19th February 1939, when about 800 persons were assaulted and injured within about an hour. All these events are described in the following pages. Every one of the statements therein made, is supported by overwhelming and unimpeachable evidence. Mahatma Gandhi asked for an impartial Judicial tribunal to investigate into those charges and the Praja Mandal is prepared to prove those charges before any impartial tribunal.

All this organised violence and gangsterism were carried out principally by or at the instigation of persons who were either in the service of the State or its dependents. The State has not made a single arrest nor has it instituted any case against a single person. After the organised dacoities at Pansina and Ralol, two villages of Limbdi, the State issued a notification to the effect that the matter was being enquired into by an officer specially appointed for the purpose. The public still awaits the result of the so-called enquiry.

# INTRODUCTION

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In face of this organised goondaism, the people remained completely non-violent. There has not been a single case of retaliation or injury to any officer of the State or any other person.

When life became impossible in the State and there remained no safety of person or property or any rule of law, six thousand people left the territory of the State, leaving their property worth lakhs of rupees and a large majority of them are still on "hijrat" (migration) since last eight months.

The reign of terror and repression has continued and increased after the "hijrat". The State has confiscated the properties of and imposed heavy fines on those who were members of or sympathised with or were suspected to sympathise with the Praja Mandal. The properties confiscated and fines imposed are confiscated and recovered without any enquiry, notice or order. Everything is done orally at the whim of the officials. All the properties of the peasants who have migrated have been confiscated without any notice or intimation to them before or after confiscation. Similarly the shops of the merchants who have migrated have been broken open and the goods worth thousands of rupees removed without any notice or intimation before or after. No one is permitted to return without being made to pay heavy fine. Those who return to their homes without paying fine, are turned out. No one is permitted to enter the State territory with a white (gandhi) cap. Even strangers are compelled to remove the white cap or it is compulsorily removed. Even those who have left the State territory are not safe. Various threats are held out to them. The repression continues unabated.

The mercantile community has come in for special treatment. As the only community which was educated and politically conscious, it was naturally in the forefront of the movement. The leaders of the movement were all of them leading merchants each of them having properties worth thousands in the Limbdi City. They are all of them responsible persons having a large stake. Economically they had nothing to gain and everything to lose by the movement. Each one of them was on friendly terms with the royal family for a number of years. They were encouraged in the beginning by the promises of help and sympathy held out by the Yuvaraj. The State has determined to ruin and wipe off the mercantile community in order to entirely crush the spirit of the people and to increase its hold on the peasantry.

The Paramount Power has remained a silent spectator of this rule of barbarism for the last 10 months. It has not moved a finger against the brutal and heartless repression. Lives and properties of thousands of people are at stake. The ruler of Limbdi has turned a deaf ear to the appeals of Mahatma Gandhi.

*Bombay, 19th October, 1939.*

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# CHAPTER I

## Background

LIMBDI, which has sprung into unenviable notoriety as "Lawless Limbdi" during the past few months, is a magnified estate among the congeries of States and estates which make up Kathiawar. It has an area of 246 square miles and a population of about 40,000. Limbdi, the principal town has a population of about 13,000. There are besides 39 villages, big and small, (and one or two petty towns). 12 of these villages constitute the Yuvraj's private estate with its special headquarters at Ranagadh. A peculiarly oppressive form of serfdom prevails in these villages, and the inhabitants live on the margin of sub-human existence. They are rooted to the land and have little better rights than chattels. The richest lands in the State lie in the Bhal district. Besides the usual local grain crops, these lands grow a much valued variety of cotton. Both the agricultural and the mercantile classes in the State are subjected to a number of special levies, several of them extraordinarily oppressive and extortionate in character.

The Ruler collects about Rs. 8,00,000 as revenue each year. The incidence of taxation is naturally heavy. Most of the amount is collected from semi-starved village agriculturists. The main item in the revenue is the State's share of agricultural produce. It is as high as 1|4th share for the grain crops, and 1|3rd for cotton. Over and above this share, a number of inequitous levies, such as Kashba Vero, Santi Vero, Toya Vero, Cattle Vero, Marriage Tax, Tolamani, Ganot, etc. together with the monopolies make up a considerable part of the rest of the revenue. Cleverly devised rules and regulations affecting labour and marketing, squeeze in a little more. Of the amount thus collected, 50 per cent is appropriated by the Ruler and his family. The tax-gathering machinery absorbs most of the other 50 per cent. Little returns to the tax-payer in the shape of any service. Practically not more than one anna in a Rupee is spent on Education, Sanitation or Medical Relief. There is scarcity of drinking water in several villages. There is no street lighting even in the petty towns or major villages.

The Palace which rules over this State is presided over by a Trinity. There is the aged ruler, Sir Daulatsinhiji. He is over seventy, and to-day is content to play a passive part in the administration. The *Yuvraj*, Shri Digvijayasinhiji, is the "de facto" ruler. He is an accomplished prince, educated and naturally shrewd. He has a courtly address, and in discussions often displays a wide grasp. In other surroundings, he might have developed some fine idealism. But in the foetid atmosphere of a Kathiawar Palace, and as a representative of a decaying order, his talents have found a more natural vent in the pursuit of personal pleasures, and the conduct of petty intrigues. He frankly declares his belief in undiluted autocracy.

The actual administration of the State is in the hands of the Dewan, Shri Fatehsinhji, the third son of the ruler. Shri Fatehsinhji is a Cantabian and a Barrister-at-Law. His is a more practical bent. All the three, are the inheritors of autocratic traditions. They are unwilling to recognise the change in the spirit of the times. Personal and Palace needs come first in their consideration. In their common policy, they have shown no sympathy or understanding of popular aspirations. And face to face with a spontaneous popular movement, they have not hesitated to resort to heartless repression, and the employment of hireling cruelty.

To suppress the popular movement for people's elementary rights, no less than fascist and Nazi methods have been adopted by this educated royal family. (1) Organised gangsterism, (2) Extermination of *Praja Mandal* workers, especially Mercantile class people who were politically more conscious, (3) Plunder and confiscation of property on mass scale without any formality of law. These were some of the main features of that method, the details of which are given in subsequent chapters.

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**RECEPTION OF PRAJA MANDAL WORKERS IN VILLAGES.**

**Streets of Siani decorated: Through these streets passed the procession arranged for the reception of Praja Mandal Workers.**

# CHAPTER II

## Awakening and Conflict

LIMBDI, though a separate State under a separate ruler, is flesh of flesh and bone of bone of Kathiawar. Kathiawar last year acquired a new consciousness. The long night of palace oppression at last appeared to be over, and there were glimmers around of the coming dawn of popular liberties. The Kathiawar Political Conference was activising the people, and the rapid developments at Rajkot set people dreaming. Rulers and popular leaders started planning for the future everywhere.

As yet, Limbdi was still slumbering. The autocratic rule of the Thakoresaheb and his family, haunted the people like a nightmare, but they were not conscious of any means by which they could shake the bad dream off. But all unknown to them, the leaven was spreading. The fight for democratic freedom, waged by the Indian National Congress, was stirring men's minds, and its message was welcomed in the remotest village as the inspirer of new hopes. The villagers of Limbdi were no exception. New aspirations began to thrill their hearts and they were acquiring a new outlook.

Perhaps, it was this change in the popular mind which impelled it to react with unwonted vigour against one of these periodical outrages committed by palace hirelings to contribute to the orgies of pleasure to which some of the members of the royal family used to devote themselves. Kidnapping of young girls has been common enough feature of life in these States, but the disappearance of a youthful palace maidservant Parvati by name, and her subsequent discovery at Ranagadh, the headquarters of the Yuvaraj, caused quite a furore. Public indignation expressed itself in no unmistakeable manner, and the palace became conscious of the existence of a new force. Vigorous investigations discovered another case of kidnapping for similar purposes, and the Yuvaraj found himself in an embarrassing position. Some prominent popular leaders of Limbdi who met the *Yuvaraj* at this time in Bombay, suggested a reasonable solution, and the heir-apparent was in such a chastened mood that he readily accepted their advice. It was a notable triumph for justice, and gave a feeling of great relief to everyone concerned.

This contact that came to be established between the Yuvaraj and some popular leaders in Bombay, began to develop. Talks revolved round the issues before the country and particularly the States. The problem of popular share in administration was also discussed in the abstract. The Yuvaraj appeared to display keen interest in these discussions. He also appeared to be anxious to forestall all agitation in his State. He said he felt that people should be organised if they were to function effectively in politics. At one of the interviews, he even expressed a

desire that responsible public leaders of Limbdi should proceed to the State and help the people to organise themselves, and form a *Praja Mandal*. It was a happy surprise for the leaders to see a prince showing such keen enthusiasm in the cause of the people. All this was in November 1938.

During Christmas, the leaders went to Limbdi to establish Praja Mandal at Limbdi. At the invitation of the Yuvaraj, the leaders saw him. There was a complete change of front on his part. He had devised a scheme to divide the city and villages, and to divide people by communities and castes. He insisted that the Praja Mandal should under no circumstances go to the villages. He professed concern for the villagers, but wanted dictatorial powers to work his so-called scheme. The Yuvaraj is a political theorist, and believes in autocracy which he calls benevolent. He hates democracy. He dreaded nothing more than Praja Mandal workers going to the villages. He stated that he was willing to grant certain reforms such as popular Municipality and control over hospital and education in the city on the condition that the Praja Mandal agreed to leave the villages completely to him. The Praja Mandal workers naturally could not agree to such a condition. The Limbdi State, like the rest of India, lives in its villages. Out of an income of about eight lakhs, Limbdi City yields ony about Rs. 50,000. There was no use for a Praja Mandal which could not reach the villages. The Yuvaraj then stated that he was willing to make a declaration on Rajkot lines and invited a draft. A draft was submitted to him. He gave counter-drafts or formulas. The formulas were as vague as possibly they could be. There was no assurance that any constitution drafted by a committee would be given effect to. The essence however of all these drafts was to divide the City and the villages and one community from another. That was his idea of devising a constitution suited to the natural genius of the people. A condition was that until the committee he intended to set up, completed its investigation and submitted its report, there should be no political activity of any kind in the villages. His idea clearly was to gain time and let the enthusiasm subside and die out; At the same time state officers and their agents were moving in the villages forbiding people to join the Praja Mandal.

While these discussions were going on, there was great awakening in the people and there was unprecedented enthusiasm. Huge meetings were being held in Limbdi almost every day, and the Praja Mandal was formed at one of such meetings by a resolution which runs thus:—

## RESOLUTION PASSED ON 24-12-38.

This public meeting of the Citizens of Limbdi hereby resolves to establish Limbdi Rajya Praja Mandal on the following principles:—

1. The name of the Association shall be Shri Limbdi Rajya Praja Mandal.

2. The goal of the Mandal is to attain responsible Government for the people of Limbdi. Responsible Government means the Government of H. H. The Thakore Saheb carried on by a Minister or Ministers responsible to the elected representatives of the people.
3. Subject to the aforesaid goal, the Mandal will work for the political, social and economic uplift of the people of Limbdi.
4. Every Citizen of Limbdi over the age of 18 years can become a Member.
5. The annual fee shall be anna one.

Thousands in the City joined the Praja Mandal and invitations began to pour in from the villages. The working committee of the Kathiawar Political Conference met at Limbdi on 1st January 1939, and the President, Darbar Gopaldas and Mr. Dheber, the leader of Rajkot, were taken in a grand procession. At a mass meeting where more than 20,000 people were present, villagers flocked in large numbers from the remotest villages of Limbdi.

The Praja Mandal had, in unequivocal terms, declared that though its ultimate goal was responsible government under the aegis of the ruler, its immediate objective was only to educate the people and to get into contact with them. The Praja Mandal had declared emphatically that it had no intention to start any form of direct action or any movement other than that of educating the people by peaceful and legitimate methods.

The Yuvaraj and the State officers got alarmed at the rapid progress of the movement and the wide support it was gathering. The *Yuvaraj* insisted that under no circumstances the Praja Mandal workers should go to the villages. "You shan't touch my villages" was his order. The movement became immediately a movement for civil liberty, that of free speech and free association. The Yuvaraj argued, intrigued and threatened but the Praja Mandal workers stood firm. They could not make any compromise on the elementary rights of free speech and free association.

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# CHAPTER III

## The Terror

AS the negotiations dragged along, the Praja Mandal workers realised that the Palace was not only determined to break the negotiations off, but that plans were already afoot to break the Praja Mandal itself.

The Praja Mandal was following mainly the line of organisation inspired by the Indian National Congress. Its aims and methods were limited, and its main work was strengthening the organisation of the Mandal itself. So the work consisted entirely of visits to villages, public meetings and enlistments of members.

But the Palace authorities took an alarmistic view of even these simple activities. They were determined that even with its limited objects the Praja Mandal ought not to be allowed to take root in the villages. So they devoted their entire energies for the single purpose of smashing the Praja Mandal.

The Yuvaraj and the Dewan have been following the progress of popular movements in British India and in some of the States. They had seen how under Ordinance-Rule and Lathi-Raj, the non-violent movement actually grew in strength. They had also found that neither the severity of state repression nor the direct use of force by Government curbed the people.

So in devising their own plans, the Yuvaraj and the Dewan determined that they should avoid the "mistakes" of the authorities in British India. Their reading of history had taught them that sanguinary repression, relentlessly carried out, succeeded in eradicating "poisonous doctrines" and "pernicious opinions". But public opinion has so far advanced to-day that no State can take direct responsibility for the degree of terrorism required for the successful achievement of these objects. Recent developments in European political theory and practice has shown the great potentialities of extra-legal engines of coercion in the carrying out of a terrorist policy. Communism, Fascism and Nazism have entrenched themselves in positions of power by a full exploitation of these means. The spy, the criminal and the hireling, judiciously encouraged, aided and abetted by the State authorities, have proved more effective in intimidating the masses than armed police or regular troops. Limbdi studied Moscow, Rome and Berlin and copied their methods with local embellishments of its own. In certain respects, it has even improved on the totalitarian technique.

Broadly the following four lines were followed:—

(1) Manufacture of pseudo-political organisations to dispute the representative capacity of the Praja Mandal, and to break up its meetings,

(2) Full license to notorious persons and petty State Servants and dependents to intimidate, rob and assault Praja Mandal workers and sympathisers

(3) The complete withdrawal of the protection of law from the Praja Mandal workers,

(4) The full employment of the Ruler's autocratic powers against the Praja Mandal workers in harrassing them and confiscating their property.

In the policy so carefully devised, a policy of actual terrorism was employed without having to bear responsibility for it. A body of hirelings like the Nazi Storm Troopers or S. A. Men did all the havoc, and their victims were deprived of the protection of law.

Those who had the temerity to disregard the State, lie bleeding and broken, but the Statute-Book is unstained and the hands of the State forces are clean,—at least as far as evidence is concerned.

The Villages of Limbdi have each a number of village-watchmen called Pagies and Pasayatas. Some of these are well-known dacoits. Karsan Pagi of Panshina is famous. His depredations in British India landed him in a goal in British India for seven years. After his release, he again found asylum in Pansina. All these Pagis and Pasatayas were organised and were given full liberty and license to harass, intimidate and coerce the workers and the villagers. Petty State servants and village headmen, such as the Mukhi of Jambu joined these forces. The higher officers silently encouraged and watched the exploits of these notorious characters. . . . .

The Palace commenced hostilities by organising the Sanatan Mandal and the Muslim Jamat. They were all creations of the Palace, breathing its breath, voicing its desires and doing its behests. The Sanatan Mandal has an executive council of 15. Eight of them are State officials, dependent on the Durbar for their daily bread. Two of them are Honorary Magistrates and two are creatures totally dependent on Court favours. One of them is the holder of the Ice Monopoly granted by the State. The other two are obscure individuals.

The Muslim Jamat is much more a Palace adjunct than the Sanatan Mandal. Almost all the members of it are servants of the State. But it is these associations which are being pitted against the Praja Mandal. Not only are they tutored to question the undoubtedly representative character of the Praja Mandal, but they are encouraged to interfere actively with the work of the Praja Mandal. They issue blatant challenges and provoke open conflicts. And in the breaking of the Praja Parishad, the Sanatan Mandal played a part which constituted a disgrace to the Dharma they professed, and cast a stain on the State's honour which nothing could remove.

The Praja Mandal started its work with establishing contact with the villages. Invitations came to the leaders from villages and wherever the workers went, they had a great welcome and enthusiastic response to their call. The Bhal District soon became a stronghold of the Praja Mandal.

The State authorities set the wheels of their terror machinery in motion. Villagers were warned against the dire consequences of listening to "Bania" harangues. The reserve villages of the Yuvaraj were first successfully intimidated. The inhabitants of these villages were terrified out of all association with the Praja Mandal.

In the other villages, people could not be so easily intimidated. So the Terror Troops transferred their attentions to the volunteers and Praja Mandal workers. State officials toured these villages, and warned the inhabitants against all association with the Praja Mandal. The Praja Mandal intensified its work. Members were enlisted, volunteers were enrolled, and Chhavanis (Camps) were organised. The State set on foot a wide-spread campaign of intimidation in the villages. Sensing the tension in the atmosphere and jealous about the good name of the Praja Mandal, only responsible leaders toured the villages.

Incidents began to occur soon after a week. The car in which Bhaktilaxmibai, the wife of Darbar Gopaldas, a prominent worker of Gujarat and President of Limbdi Peoples' Conference was travelling, was surrounded in the village of Jambu by a number of hireling hooligans. The Thakore Saheb is almost in the position of a godfather to Bhaktilaxmibai, whose father Mr. Jhaverbhai Amain was Dewan of Limbdi and he was instrumental to install the present Thakore Saheb to the Gadi, when it had fallen vacant by the death of Sir Jaswantsinhji, without an heir. Still even a position so exalted could not prevent the goondas from turning their attention to her activities. The car was surrounded and some workers were assaulted. It was only the personal courage of Bhaktilaxmibai and the intervention of the villagers, which prevented, uglier developments. But the incident marked the opening of the campaign.

Another car of the Praja Mandal was smashed near Shiani, and a volunteer and the driver were severely beaten. In this village, a band of goondas operated under the orders of State servants like Tapubha and Labhshanker. They loitered in the thoroughfares of the village, day and night, and systematically harassed the workers and sympathisers of the Praja Mandal with a view to terrorise them. Open assaults were made and meetings broken. Shiani had become the seat of gangsters. Because Shiani happened to be the central village amongst all the villages of that side, it was selected as first place of attack by the gangsters.

Undaunted by such harassment, the Praja Mandal pushed on with its work. An open air public meeting was held in the open space just in front of State Kacheri. Some ten rowdies tried to break up the meeting, but the audience was determined to proceed with the meeting. The Revenue Minister was present. In spite of the disturbance, the meeting was conducted successfully.

A procession was taken from Limbdi on foot to congratulate the villagers and to assure them of solidarity. The procession was welcomed with great enthusiasm.

# CHAPTER IV

## Dacoities in Villages

THE Durbar was receiving daily reports of enthusiastic manner in which the message of the Praja Mandal was being received in the villages. They were alarmed. They felt they should do something drastic to check the growth of popular forces. Intimidation had failed so far. The Praja Mandal drew its main strength from the merchants. So it was decided to organise an attack on the property of the merchants. The second stage in the terror was being evolved. It was to be theft, loot and dacoity.

The hand of the goonda came heavy on Pansina. Pansina is the gateway to the Bhal District and the Bhal District was the stronghold of the Praja Mandal. The Sanatani Mandal could get no foothold there, and State officials were reluctant to tour the villages. Pansina was the second town in the State and many workers of the Praja Mandal belonged to it, and a branch of the Praja Mandal was there with office bearers elected from themselves.

Rumour got bruited abroad that the new technique in terrorism would first be employed in Panshina. Karsan Pagi was the person to whom all eyes turned. At a conference of Pagis (village watchmen) held at about that time under the presidentship of Shri Ishwarbhai K. Vyas, M.L.A., it was decided that Pagis should do nothing against the interests of the people. The Praja Mandal authorities wrote to Shri Vyas and wanted him to prevent the Pagis from becoming tools in the hands of the Durbar. The Panshina Mahajan called Karsan and reminded him of his old time promise to see that not a pice-worth of property was endangered and requested him to give them a new assurance. But that notorious leader appeared to be under some commitments already. "I am on the horns of a dilemma" he vainly pleaded, "Why do you not compromise with the Thakore Saheb?"

The Praja Mandal workers fearing the blow might come any day, advised the workers to pack up their valuables and get ready to quit Pansina, or to arrange people's own non-violent guards. The workers got the warning just in time to pack up the valuables—and to hand them over to the dacoits. For the goondas acted with unexpected swiftness.

The harrowing details of that dastardly outrage are told in the statement issued by the Praja Mandal dated 8-2-1939. To quote the communique:—

"February 5th was celebrated as "Rajkot Day" at Pansina and there was a meeting which dispersed at about 10 p. m. About 11 p.m. people heard firing all round in the village and outside. Then one by one, houses of Praja Mandal workers or sympathisers were raided.

About 60 persons appear to have come. They divided themselves

into two batches of about 20 persons each, the rest remaining outside the village surrounding it.

They had come armed with all kinds of weapons such as guns, swords, knives, iron rods, green bamboo sticks, etc. and had brought motors.

They were dressed to disguise and carried torches and lanterns.

The dacoits first locked the Praja Mandal Office from outside to prevent the volunteers from coming out and then proceeded.

One party attacked Chunilal Dharsey. The man is insane since 5 or 6 years and is very poor. His mud house is fallen. He and his wife live in the verandah. His crime was that his son Bhuralal was a Praja Mandal volunteer. The dacoits broke open the outer door and about 20 persons entered. They first asked for Bhuralal. He was sleeping at the Praja Mandal Office. They then belaboured Chunilal and his wife. The mad man shrieked and prayed for mercy. His wife's ear-rings were removed. Everything in their house was broken and destroyed. Chunilal and his wife have left Pansina.

Next came the turn of Nathalal Purshottam, another Praja Mandal worker. His aged parents were sleeping in the outer verandah with his daughter aged 14. His wife was sleeping in the room, having delivered about 20 days ago. He was sleeping in the outer verandah. The iron railings of this verandah were broken. Nathalal attempted to fly by the outer door. He met four or five persons facing him with guns. He came back. He was soundly belaboured with sticks and kicks. With great difficulty he carried his wife to a neighbour. His father, aged 64 and ill, was assaulted and seriously injured. He was wounded on the head and bled. Nathalal's daughter aged 14 was attacked and all ornaments on her person removed. She has been so terribly frightened that she is weeping all the while. His two houses were broken open. All boxes large and small were broken and the dacoits carried away ornaments and cash worth about eight to ten thousand rupees. Nathalal and his family have left Pansina.

Then came the turn of Sukhlal Jasraj. His son Kantilal was also a Praja Mandal volunteer. The outer door was first broken and about 15 persons entered. They first asked for Kantilal. He was sleeping at the Praja Mandal Office. Then Sukhlal, his wife and his daughter were attacked and injured. His houses were broken open and many things destroyed. The dacoits carried away booty worth about Rs. 3,000|-.

Another party appears to have gone the other way. They first went to Nagardas Chhaganlal. His outer door was broken open. He and his wife closed the doors of the house. The dacoits began to break the doors with axes and iron rods. Some time thereafter, Nagardas himself opened the house. He was attacked and seriously injured. He was robbed. Many things were broken. The dacoits then again attacked Nagardas to show his valuables. They threatened to kill his children sleeping in the house. They threatened to attack his wife.

Then came the turn of Kalidas Dhanji, President of the Praja Mandal, who lives next to Nagardas. There is a wall in between them. The dacoits went over the wall. Kalidas lives alone. He attempted to fly by the outer door. He opened it and was immediately attacked and severely belaboured by 4 or 5 persons standing outside. He became unconscious. He was thrown in a cot and his house was broken open. Everything in it was destroyed and valuables carried away. Then he was attacked to show more. Three or four persons sat upon his chest and attacked him with knives and swords. He received serious injuries. He had a sword-thrust at the back about 3-4 inches deep and was in a pool of blood. He has been removed to the Hospital and has been operated. Kalidas is aged about 55.

Then came the turn of Chhotalal Punjabhai, another prominent Praja Mandal worker. His outer door was broken open. One servant in the gangway was beaten. The iron railings of the verandah were then broken. Chhotalal and his wife were in one of the rooms. The dacoits began breaking it with axes and iron rods. Sometime thereafter Chhotalal himself opened the room. He and his wife were dragged out and severely beaten with green bamboo sticks and kicks. The dacoits then broke open boxes large and small in the house and carried the valuables. They then again attacked Chhotalal to show more. A lantern was thrown on his head. There was serious injury. He was wounded on the hand. A stick was thrust on his back part. The clock then struck 12-30. The clock was immediaetly broken. His wife was then attacked and the ornaments on her person removed. They attempted to cut her feet but then abandoned. They then broke another room and destroyed a great deal. Then they wanted to go upstairs. The staircase door was locked. It was fired upon and then broken. Three more rooms were broken open upstairs and valuables carried away and many other things destroyed. Chhotalal's wife is in bed and removed to Ahmedabad.

The dacoits also have broken open five shops one of them being a small shop of Bhuralal, son of Chunilal.

They appear to have left at about 1-30 a. m. All this while there was continuous firing in the air all round.

Every one who has been attacked, injured and robbed is either a worker or a member of the Praja Mandal. The dacoits met several other persons. They were asked to go away. There were three marriage parties in the village that night. They were not even approached.

There is a police party kept at Pansina and there are a number of village watchmen. Not one of them came out.

No State servant went to make any inquiries even in the morning. News was received in Limbdi at about 9 a. m. the next day and immediately doctors were sent and Kalidas who was in a precarious condition was removed to Limbdi and other injured were attended to. About 30

workers of the Praja Mandal from Limbdi went immediately and brought to Limbdi all those who desired to come away.

Darbar Gopaldas came to Pansina on the 7th February. He interviewed each one of those who was attacked and wounded, and visited each place. He saw the destruction. At several places, the bamboo sticks, pickaxes and iron rods were left by the dacoits. They have been brought to Limbdi.

The State is now said to be investigating. We do not want to comment at this stage on the methods of so-called investigation.

Similar is the tale in other villages. Another village Ralol, four miles away from Pansina, was looted the same night and only Praja Mandal workers were attacked, injured and robbed."

The peculiarities of this "dacoity" deserve more than mere mention. They have to be carefully borne in mind.

(1) Out of 800 houses in Pansina, only about 12 houses were selected for committing this "dacoity". These 12 houses were in different streets, and every one of them was the house of a Praja Mandal worker or volunteer.

(2) The Praja Mandal Office was locked with volunteers and workers inside before the operations commenced.

(3) The "dacoits" entered the houses and shops calling Praja Mandal workers by their names. While they belaboured the inmates, they shouted derisive political slogans. Where workers were absent from their homes, they particularly enquired for them, and over and above the workers, their relatives were assaulted.

(4) While there were repeated firings in the air, the inhabitants, other than Praja Mandal workers, were assured that they had nothing to fear.

(5) Within two hours after this "dacoity" was committed, a similar outrage was perpetrated on Ralol, a village four miles away. And at Ralol only 3 houses out of 600 were looted. The victims were not "Banias" but goldsmiths. Because they were Praja Mandal workers.

(6) The Pansina procedure was repeated at Ralol with the punctiliousness of a ritual.

(7) Two high officials of the State came to the town the previous day and are said to have stayed there on the night of occurrence.

(8) The Town has got a Police Thana and a band of Pagis, but they were blissfully ignorant of this entire incident though the "dacoits" were on the move for nearly 3 hours in that little town.

(9) Panisana has a system of village watchmen called 'Pucca-Pagipana' meaning that the village watchmen are bound to make good the loss of any theft or dacoity. Karsan Pagi is the head of the village watchmen. In this case not a penny has been recovered from him nor any compensation made to those who were robbed.

News of this atrocity reached Limbdi the next day. The Praja Mandal sent a relief party immediately. A procession marched to the Palace demanding justice for Pansina victims.

The Thakore Saheb received a deputation at 5 p. m. He said he was entirely unaware of the outrage. The Dewan suggested that the aggrieved people should file complaints. The Thakore Saheb offered to send Shri Fatesinhji to enquire. But when the Praja Mandal leaders roundly declared that the Dewan was the party concerned, the Thakore Saheb did not pursue the conversation.

The Dewan went to Pansina that night. A special officer was deputed for enquiry on the third day. The public still awaits the result of his inquiry. No action has been taken by the State so far. Neither a single arrest nor a single case against any one. The procession squatted in front of the Palace for four days. Most of the members were fasting. The Palace was all along holding out promises of enquiry and redress. But more sinister forces were actively at work. Even while promises of punishment to the miscreants were being held out and even as the inhabitants of Limbdi were squatting before the Palace, the "Pansina Dacoity" was repeated at Karsongadh on 9th February and earlier on the 7th at Shiani. These dacoities were followed by a series of thefts and looting of standing crops.

*Following is a summary and list of loots and thefts:—*

DACOITIES :—

(1) **Panshina dacoity on date 5-2-39.**

(a) Number of dacoits about sixty came in cars,

(b) Most of them were with guns, swords, dharias, knives and lathies,

(c) Ten persons including females and children were wounded and injured; all of them being Praja Mandal workers and their family members, one being wounded by sword,

(d) Six houses and five shops were robbed; all belonging to Praja Mandal workers,

(e) Property worth Rs. 25,000 was taken away in cars kept ready in the precincts of the village,

(f) Several rounds of shots were fired intermittently for two hours.

(2) **Ralol dacoity on date 5-2-39.**

(a) Number of dacoits about 30,

(b) Ten persons wounded and injured,

(c) Dacoits armed with guns, swords, dharias, knives and lathies,

(d) Four houses, all of Praja Mandal workers were robbed,

(e) Property worth about Rs. 8,000 was taken away.

(3) **Karsangadh dacoity on date 9-2-39.**

(a) Number of dacoits about 20,

(b) Armed with guns, swords, dharias, knives and lathies,

(c) House of a tailor, who was a Praja Mandal worker was robbed,

(d) One wounded and two others were severely beaten,

(e) Property found was worth only Rs. 200|-.

**(4) Shiani dacoity on date 7-2-39.**

(a) Dacoits about 10,

(b) Armed with swords, guns, etc.,

(c) One house of Praja Mandal worker looted,

(d) Property worth about Rs. 1,000|- carried away.

THEFTS :—

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ralol, | .. date | 4-2-39, | Property worth | Rs. | 20|-, |
| 2 | Laxmisar | ,, | 7-2-39 | -do- | ,, | 180|-, |
| 3 | Mojidad | .. ,, | 19-2-39 | -do- | ,, | 25|-, |
| 4 | Panshina | .. ,, | 19-3-39 | -do- | ,, | 300|-, |
| 5 | Balol | .. ,, | 3-3-39 | -do- | ,, | 1,000|-, |
| 6 | Shiani | .. ,, | February | -do- | ,, | 500|-, |
| 7 | Devpura | .. ,, | 6-4-39 | -do- | Agricultural produce | |
| 8 | Devpura | .. ,, | March | | Two mares, | |
| 9 | Panshina & Shiani | .. ,, | February | Agricultural produce | | |
| 10 | Balol | .. ,, | April | -do- | Rs. | 523|- |
| 11 | Panshina | .. ,, | May | -do- | ,, | 500|- |
| 12 | Ralol | .. ,, | -do- | -do- | ,, | 500|- |
| 13 | Jambu | .. ,, | -do- | -do- | ,, | 600|- |
| 14 | Shiani (thrice) | ,, | -do- | -do- | ,, | 6,000|- |
| 15 | Kattechi | ,, ,, | -do- | -do- | ,, | 2,128|- |

Intimidation and coercion of villagers was in full swing in all villages. Thick rumours of armed dacoities were in the air. The fate of Panshina awaited every village that dared to brave the terror, especially, the Bhal villages. In several of these villages, responsible leaders of the Praja Mandal were in charge of the chhavanies. The villagers spontaneously responded to the call of the Praja Mandal. They organised parties of non-violent guards under the leadership of the Praja Mandal workers and watched the village in hundreds whole night by turns. Its success was immense. The dacoits were checked in their nefarious activities which remained unsuccessful in spite of repeated attempts.

The Praja Mandal was determined to hold the session on 19th February as previously declared and the enthusiasm of the people was unbounded. Hundreds of villagers in their carts, on horse back and on foot had organised a march to Limbdi City covering over a distance of 30 miles in a day passing through villages to reach Limbdi on the 18th February. The Palace was alarmed. It was freely mentioned that a big offensive was being arranged to break the Parishad and notorious persons were gathering in the city.

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# CHAPTER V

## Conference Preparations

THE preparations for the Parishad were going on in full speed. Responsible workers had established their camps in several villages and the objects of the Parishad were being explained to the villagers. There was great enthusiasm in spite of intimidation and repression, and the villagers were expected to attend the Parishad in very large numbers.

The State was not slow to sense the importance of the Parishad and was determined to break it. The State, however, decided to remain in the background officially. It adopted other methods of breaking the Parishad.

The assaults and dacoities in the villages had succeeded in intimidating some of the villagers. State servants or dependants intensified their propaganda to dissuade the villagers from attending the session under various threats. The State also devised a scheme to make it appear that the people were divided. It had already started Sanatan Mandal so far as the City was concerned; but the Mandal could make no headway in the villages. The State therefore, tried another plan of starting so-called Village Panchayats.

Loyalty pledges were taken from some of the villagers in some of the villages, and these "loyal" people were supposed to make a request to the State to grant a Village Panchayat. In a Notification issued by the State regarding the constitution of the Village Panchayat, it was stated that only a certain class of peasants (Khatedars) would have a right to elect the so-called representatives to this Village Panchayat, and this Village Panchayat was then granted certain powers, civil and criminal, as also regarding the collection of certain minor taxes for the sanitation and education and other minor requirements of the village. This was a subtle move to divide the peasants between themselves as also the peasants as a whole from other communities, particularly, the mercantile community. The so-called Village Panchayat was to be granted exclusive power to try civil cases of any amount which would mean that all debts due by the peasants to the merchants would be tried by the Village Panchayat. At the same time, a propaganda was set on foot by the State that the peasants should not pay any debt due to the merchants. These were inducements held out to the peasants, apart from threats, in order to dissuade them from either joining the Praja Mandal or attending the Parishad.

In this way, having taken loyalty pledges from some of the peasants in some of the villages, the State made a show of granting Village Panchayats on which were "elected" the nominees of the State and this so-called Village Panchayat became another engine of repression.

The curious thing about the whole of this movement in the Limbdi State is that the State has always remained in the background officially.

It was open to the State for example to have banned the Parishad, but it did not want to do anything of the kind. It had learnt the lesson that banned sessions always gained greater publicity and evoked greater sympathy and enthusiasm. It did not desire to commit the mistake of other States.

Having obtained the "loyalty pledges" and established village panchayats in the manner aforesaid, the State issued a notification on 16th February 1939, stating that the State had received some applications from the citizens of Limbdi and from the villages that they were not in agreement with the policy of the Praja Mandal, and that they challenged the right of the Praja Mandal to hold a conference in the name of people, *and therefore, they desired the State to ban the conference convened by the Praja Mandal to be held on* 19-2-1939. The notification proceeded to State that according to the figures collected by the State, 75% of the people of Limbdi State were opposed to the conference, and that even as regards the remaining 25%, who have not enlisted their opposition, there was no proof that everyone of them was in favour of holding the conference. The notification further proceeded to State that the State was willing to grant reforms and that in fact it had already granted village panchayats and local self-Government and that there was no need whatsoever for the conference. The notification ended with these ominous words:—

"In these circumstances, the holding of a conference which can speak for the minority is felt unnecessary. The concessions that they aim at securing and some more concessions are granted to many of the villages and if the Praja Mandal stops its activities and agitation, similar concessions will be granted to the remaining villages. It is clearly inadvisable to hold the conference in face of the strong opposition of the large section of the people. *In these circumstances, disturbances may take place by the situation getting serious due to the holding of the conference.*

. . . .

"However, the State does not want to encroach upon the primary rights of the people by banning the conference, *but if in spite of the* knowledge of this grave situation, the conference meets and if distressing *events take place, the responsibility will be wholly that of the Praja Mandal.*"

. . .

The solicitude of the State for the primary rights of the people is amusing. The threat contained in the last paragraph is unequivocal and clear. But it did not stop at that. Simultaneously with this notification, oral instructions were issued to the officers in the villages to notify to the villagers the risk in attending the Parishad and handwritten notifications were placed in the villages reading as follows:—

"It is to be notified in connection with the notification of 16-2-1939 that as mentioned in it, those who attend the conference which is to be

held against the opposition of the majority of the people will be considered the opponents of the State and local officers should write down their names."

So far, the State had kept up a show of civil liberty in the city. The villages were groaning under terrible repression, but with a view to preserve its reputation to the outside world, the city had not met with any direct repression so far. But the State could no longer conceal its mailed fist.

The Sanatan Mandal and the Muslim Jamat were not inactive. On 18th February 1939, the Sanatan Mandal issued a leaflet which runs as follows :—

"The so-called Praja Mandal (Bania Mandal) have convened a peoples' conference to meet on the 19-2-1939 in the name of people of Limbdi in spite of the opposition of the majority of the people. The Sanatan subjects of this State are going to attend this conference in large numbers to demonstrate their peaceful opposition. They have the right to attend the peoples conference as it is held in the peoples name. If the Bania Mandal tries to stop entry by cordon or by holding the conference behind closed doors, *attempts will be made to enter the pandal by breaking the cordon. Bania Mandal is therefore, warned not to place any such obstacle and if in spite of the warning an obstacle is placed the Sanatanists will enter the pandal at any cost and if in so doing a breach of peace is resulted, Bania Mandal will be held responsible for it.*"

The composition of the Sanatan Mandal has already been described in a previous chapter. The language of the leaflet and the State notification bear unmistakeable marks of common origin. The leaflet was a clear warning of the coming events. Is significance is emphasised by the fact that the Superintendent of Police is the member of the Working Committee of the Sanatan Mandal. The notification of the 16th February made it plain that there would be no police protection and the leaflet of the Sanatan Mandal gave full licence to the *goondas* to do their work.

If the majority was against the Parishad, the easiest thing of course was for them to attend the session and vote down its resolutions. That would have been the democratic way, but that was not the way which they intended to follow; that would have disclosed the hollowness of their claim. The events of the next two days described in the following chapters leave no doubt as to the intentions of the State.

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# CHAPTER VI

## Day light Gangsterism

*18th February.*

THE peasants from the villages were to reach Limbdi City on the evening of the 18th February, starting from the furthermost villages of Limbdi, and making a march of about 30 miles during the day. The State began collecting its forces from the morning of the 18th. Bohras from the villages of Jambu and Ralol came in good numbers under the leadership of the notorious Mukhi (Village Headman) of Jambu. Pagis, pasayatas and toyas (village watchmen) came in large numbers under the leadership of *Karsan Pagi*. All of them gathered under the banners of the Sanatan Mandal and the Muslim Jamat. They were housed in State buildings and appeared to be enjoying State hospitality. They formed into batches, carrying red and green bands. All these persons carried various kinds of weapons such as guns, swords, dharias, iron-shod lathis and bamboo sticks. The State Police had conveniently disappeared. These rowdies went round the whole city in groups, carrying weapons and shouting slogans, to terrorise the people.

Peasants on march from villages reached Limbdi City in the evening at about 6 p. m. They were led by responsible workers of the Praja Mandal who had been touring the villages for a number of days previously. In spite of the intimidation and terrorisation in the villages, about 1,500 peasants, men women and children, came on foot, in carts and on horseback. It was a sight that would remain ever green in the memory of the citizens of Limbdi. The citizens of Limbdi in large numbers went forward to receive the villagers and it formed a grand procession. The procession started from the eastern end of the City and was to end at the western end after passing through the main streets of the city.

While the procession of the peasants and the citizens of Limbdi had come some distance, the Praja Mandal leaders received news that a procession of the rowdies carrying all kinds of weapons was coming from the opposite direction. On inquiry the workers found that the procession of the so-called Sanatan Mandal and Muslim Jamat was headed by almost all the officers of the State and was deliberately coming by the route, which was declared to be the route of the Praja Mandal procession. The workers, therefore, atonce decided on a change of the route of the Praja Mandal procession, and for the time being a clash was avoided. The Praja Mandal procession ended near the city lake and was immediately dispersed to avoid untoward incidents. The mischief mongers, however, were not happy. They soon flocked to the place where the Praja Mandal procession was dispersed. Some of them were firing in the air and deliberately provoked some of the peasants and other persons to create a clash. Females in the Praja Mandal procession were about to be attacked when leading merchants like Sjt. Bhagwanlal Harakhchand

and Sjt. Amulakh Amichand at once came forward to brave the attack. The Praja Mandal volunteers in large numbers soon came to the scene and gave protection to the females. The volunteers and some of the workers of the Praja Mandal were attacked and injured. Sjt, Prahladrai Mody Pleader of Bhavnagar, who had come to attend the Parishad was one of those who were wounded. People soon dispersed and it was hoped that the night would pass quietly. But that was not to be.

The peasants-men, women and children, who had come to attend the Parishad were housed at three Praja Mandal camps and were being fed in the evening. The rowdies soon divided themselves into 3 batches of about 200 each, and surrounded each camp. They were shouting threatening slogans and brandishing their weapons. The doors of the Praja Mandal camps were, therefore, closed.

At about 10 p. m. news was received in the Praja Mandal office that the doors of one of the camps were broken and the peasants within were attacked. Praja Mandal workers and volunteers rushed to the scene where they found that lights were smashed, water pots broken and some of the peasants had been beaten. A Police Chowky was almost next door, but no attempt was made to control the rowdies or to arrest any one of them.

Naturally there was panic in the City. The Praja Mandal workers and volunteers divided themselves into groups and began patrolling the City and re-assuring the people. Smt. Bhaktilaxmibai, wife of Durbar Gopaldas, was heading the patrols.

In the meantime, leaders of the Praja Mandal, headed by Nagarsheth Sjt. Lalchand Sanghvi went to the Thakore Saheb at the palace and informed him of the events of the day. The Thakore Saheb said he was surprised to learn the news and he soon called the Superintendent of Police to control the rowdies and restore peace. The Thakore Saheb assured the leaders that they need have no anxiety, and that there would be no untoward events the next day. He also stated that an order would be issued immediately banning carrying of weapons or lathis.

In the meantime, the Praja Mandal workers and volunteers who were going round the City were met by a crowd of hooligans at one of the Parishad camps. They were led by the notorious Tapu and Labhu of Shiani fame. The Praja Mandal workers were abused, attacked and stoned and were pursued. When they reached the place where the Parishad was to be held, they found another crowd of rowdies under the leadership of the Mukhi of Jambu.

In the meantime, the leaders returned from the palace, and reported what had happened there. It was at once decided to go to the City Magistrate to invite him to see the situation for himself. It appeared that by that time a word had gone round from the headquarters to stop further mischief, and immediately quiet was restored. It was obvious that the entire hooliganism was well directed. When the workers came back with the Magistrate the rowdies were dispersing.

Many of them were identified by the workers as State servants or dependents, and some policemen in plain clothes.

The Magistrate was also taken to the Parishad camp which was raided, and he inspected the mischief done there. The Praja Mandal lead ers and workers then dispersed and went home at about 2 a. m. Some of them were sent to the Railway Station to receive the President-elect, Durbar Gopaldas, who was to arrive by the night train at about 2-30 a.m.

When the persons who had gone to receive Durbar Gopaldas reached the Station, they found that the hooligans that had dispersed from the City, had collected at the Station. When Durbar Gopaldas arrived, he and those who had gone to receive him were surrounded by the crowd, and were prevented from entering the City. All the passengers who had arrived by the train were also prevented from entering the State jurisdiction. The crowd squatted a little away from the Station to prevent the entry of Durbar Gopaldas, and guarded all approaches to the City. Passengers were thereafter examined and permitted to go.

The rowdies lit bon-fires on all sides the whole night to warm themselves in February cold. The wood for the fire was being brought from the State guest-house, in a State motor lorry.

The leaders and workers in the City received news at about 3 a. m. of what had happened at the Station. They soon went to the Station, and when they were near it, they were surrounded by the hooligans on all sides and were not permitted to proceed further or to go back. They were abused and attacked and were made to squat there for the rest of the night in shivering cold. Bhaktilaxmibai could no longer remain patient. She dashed forward through the crowd to reach the Station, as she was very anxious about the safety of her husband. She was attacked and a dagger was pointed at her throat. She, however, dauntlessly broke her way through the crowd and reached the Station.

Some of the passengers who were prevented from entring the City, sent telegrams from the Station to *the Thakore Saheb,* and the authorities concerned, describing the events. The Superintendent of Police came to the Station at about 5-30 in the morning and offered to escort Durbar Gopaldas. He refused to go alone until all the workers were safely taken to the City with him. The Praja Mandal's motor car was, therefore, sent to the city to arrange for a motor bus. The car was surrounded and was about to be attacked. But when the policeman in plain clothes who had accompanied the car asked the Mukhi of Jambu to clear the way, it was immediately done.

Thereafter Durbar Gopaldas and the workers were taken to the City. In the meantime, some Praja Mandal workers had gone to the District Magistrate, Mr. Lavingia, to take him to the Station. When they were proceeding to the Station, they were met by a crowd of police men in uniform carrying black flags. They were pointed out to the District Magistrate when he remarked that they were also citizens of Limbdi, and therefore had the right to express their dissent in such manner as they liked.

# CHAPTER VII

## "Jallianwala Baug" Tragedy

*Parishad Day, 19-2-39.*

In the morning of the 19th February, the State issued an order prohibiting the carrying of weapons. It however remained a mere paper order No attempt was made by the Police during the whole of the day to deprive any of the goondas of their weapons or to arrest any one of them for breach of the order. Parishad workers pointedly drew the attention of the Magistrates to the persons carrying lathies and other weapons but the Magistrates did nothing to enforce the order.

One batch of the hooligans of about 200 strong surrounded the residence of the President-elect from 9 a. m. in order to prevent him from going out to attend the Parishad. The party was, *inter alia*, led by a brother of a high State officer, and another State official from the village of Shiani. These hooligans carried bamboo sticks and prevented any one from entering or going out of, the camp of the President-elect.

The Parishad was to be held in the compound of a Jain Boarding, which had an enclosed compound, and a large pandal had been constructed in the centre. The Boarding is a ground floor structure. It is surrounded on east and south by public roads, and on the west and north by a State garden, with a wall in between. There were residing in the Boarding about 55 boarders at that time.

The Parishad was announced to be held at 2-30 p. m. Peasants and delegates began to flock to the place of parishad from 9 a. m. A large crowd of goondas collected outside the place of the parishad, carrying bamboo sticks and knives. A party of policemen was also present there, only to watch and probably to direct. Mr. Harishanker Joshi, an honourary magistrate of the city and a member of the Working Committee of the Sanatan Mandal was present there, leading and directing the activities of the crowd outside. By 10 a. m. about 1000 persons had gathered in the "mandap" of the parishad. A procession of Sanatan Mandal volunteers, consisting principally of the boarders of the Garasia and Brahmin Boardings, in uniform, shouting slogansand in a militant mood passed through the streets on its way to the place of the parishad. Some workers of the Praja Mandal receiving news of the tense atmosphere, went to the place of the parishad, but were prevented from going in by the crowd of hooligans. A bully fakir brandished a long dagger at them and was about to assault them, but stopped at the order of Mr. Harishanker Joshi who said "not now". The workers then had a talk with Mr. Joshi, leader of the crowd, and he advised them to leave the place for the present. The workers left the place in order to acquaint the leaders with the situation.

Leaders like Mrs. Leelavati Munshi, M.L.A., (the wife of the Home

Minister) Bombay, Sjt. Shantilal M. Shah, Solicitor, M.L.C., Bombay, Sjt. Jivanlal Dewan, Secretary, of the Gujrat Provincial Congress Committee, Sjt. Arjun Lala, Secretary of the Ahmedabad District Congress Committee and others were to reach Limbdi by the mail train at about 12-15 noon. It appears that an order went round from the headquarters, that the parishad should be broken and the job finished before these leaders arrived.

By about 11 a. m., news was received at the Praja Mandal office that the hooligans had entered the place of the parishad and had worked havoc. The workers and leaders of the Praja Mandal rushed to the scene; the District Magistrate and the City Magistrate accompanied them on request.

The scene at the place of the parishad cannot be described. Out of about 1000 persons present there, nearly 700 had been wounded and injured. Simultaneous attacks were made on other camps and inimates including children were wounded. Within three quarters of an hour the toatl of wounded reached to 700. Heads were broken, and there were serious injuries on all parts of the body. It was a gruesome sight. The persons inside the Conference pandal were made naked and were severely belaboured all over the body. The peasants who had come from remote villages, in spite of the terror and intimidation, were special objects of the attack. Some of the students of the Boarding were seriously injured. Whoever attempted to escape, was chased, caught, made naked and beaten. Jalianwalla Baug tragedy was repeated.

The place of the parishad as already stated was an enclosed compound and the doors were closed. Some of the hooligans therefore scaled the wall from the side of the garden, and others went to the roof from the public road. The tiles on the roof were freely used to attack those who were within. The main door of the compound was broken open and the whole crowd of hooligans went in. The 'mandap' was smashed to pieces and great damage done to the property of the Boarding House. A heap of clothes from those who were made naked was lying there. All these things were pointed out to the Magistrate. A party of policemen was present at the scene all through, who quietly watched the nefarious activities of the hooligans. Amongst those who attacked the peasants and delegates were State servants, State dependants, and other hirelings who were identified by those who were attacked.

The Praja Mandal leaders, workers and volunteers immediately directed all their energies to attend the wounded and the injured. The first to come on the scene, was a batch of Desha Sevikas (lady volunteers) wearing red cross badges. The car in which they came was surrounded and attacked in the very presence of the Magistrates and the Superintendent of Police. They immediately got down from the car and entered the compound dashing through the crowd. The wounded were soon carried to the state hospital, and to private doctors in Limbdi. Other

doctors who arrived from Wadhwan Camp and other neighbouring places soon attended on the wounded. The injured were carried by the volunteers to the hospitals where they were dressed and attended to. Those who were more seriously wounded were taken to another Jain Boarding and private residences. About 300 persons were seriously injured. Four or five of them were in a very precarious condition and they were detained as indoor patients at the State hospital.

The hooligans during the course of the day attempted more than once to attack the Jain Boarding where the seriously injured were housed and the dispensary of Dr. Popatlal where other injured were being treated in large numbers was also the object of repeated attacks.

The leaders from Bombay, Ahmedabad and other places arrived at about 12-30 noon. The reader will find elsewhere the statement issued by them.

The Praja Mandal workers were determined to hold the parishad exactly at 2-30 p. m. as announced. It was held at one of the Praja Mandal camps under the presidentship of Mrs. Leelavati Munshi, M.L.A., and the following two resolutions were unanimously passed:—

RESOLUTION 1.—This conference of the people of Limbdi State declares that responsible government under the aegis of the Thakore Saheb is the goal of their political aspirations and resolves to agitate for its attainment by legitimate and peaceful means.

RESOLUTION 2.—This Conference of the people of Limbdi State condemns the mass-violence organised by the State to frustrate the peaceful gathering of the peoples' Conference and extends its heartfelt sympathies to the victims of the cowardly attacks.

Some of the Praja Mandal workers including Mr. Bapalal K. Doshi and Mrs. Vijayalaxmi Parikh, hearing of the attempted attacks on the Jain Boarding where the wounded were lying, proceeded to that place in a car. Their car was attacked just near the Post Office. The Gandhi caps were snatched away, and they were abused and stoned. A little further up, their car was again surrounded and attacked. Its hood was smashed and glass panes broken. They were attacked with lathis and injured. The Revenue Secretary of the State, Mr. Jivansinhji was present at the time in the garage just opposite, from where he came out along with Mr. Daulatsinhji the garage manager and gave protection. The driver of the car in which the workers came, could not be found for sometime, he was ultimately brought from the garage.

This group of hooligans then did further mischief on the main thoroughfare for about a couple of hours. Gandhi caps were snatched away and trampled upon.

In the meantime, the parishad which was held at one of the Praja Mandal camps had concluded, and the people who had dispersed were coming to the residence of Durbar Gopaldas, headed by Mrs. Leelavati Munshi and other leaders.

A crowd of hooligans with lathies, stationed there, was in a violent mood. After Mrs. Munshi and Mrs. Desai had entered, the others were prevented from going in. The crowd was crying "Bandh Karo." Sjt. Atmaram Bhat of Bhavnagar had his shirt torn off, three white caps were snatched away, Sjt. Kantilal, a cotton merchant of Ahmedabad received an iron-shod lathi blow on his head and bled. Sjt. Shantilal Shah M.L.C., Bombay and Dr. Keshavlal Thakker (now Municipal president) of Bhavnagar were jostled.

The hooligans then went to the Praja Mandal office and assaulted several persons. The national flag was removed and trampled upon.

About 4 p.m., it appears an order was issued from headquarters to stop further mischief, and like ghosts at the waving of a magic wand, the unrully mob suddenly disappeared, and armed policemen appeared on the scene.

The people preserved exemplary non-violence in face of this organised violence. Every one of those who was injured was a Praja Mandal worker or delegate or sympathiser. Not a single person of the so-called Sanatan Mandal or Muslim Jamat was injured. An attempt was made to fabricate evidence to show that some of them were injured. It is best described in the following passage in the Joint Statement of Mrs. Leelavati Munshi and others:-

"While we were at the hospital, a group of about 25 to 30 men wearing red or green Patties, came there, lead by a man wearing green safa, who, we were told, was the village head man (Mukhi) of Jambu. He began reading names from a list he had with him. A hospital servant filled up case forms as the Mukhi called out names and one by one the persons who had accompanied him came forward and took the form. We did not see marks of any injury on any of them. Mrs. Munshi enquired what the injuries were and she was curtly told that it was for the doctor to see."

The Chief Medical Officer of the State, Dr. Keshavlal Dave, who was nowhere to be seen when the wounded were brought to the hospital and who left it to his assistants to attend to the wounded, suddenly appeared on the scene when the Mukhi of Jambu brought the batch mentioned in the passage quoted above and attended to them.

For the whole of the day, when serious hooliganism was occuring in the City, neither the Thakore Saheb nor the Yuvraj (heir-apperant) nor the Dewan came out, or called for any of the leaders of the Praja Mandal. It appeared as if the Ruler had voluntarily abdicated his power for the day in favour of the hooligans, and had handed over the State to the devil.

The panic and terror in the city can well be imagined. There was complete hartal which continued for two days afterwards. During this time, no effort whatsoever was made by the State to call any of the Praja Mandal workers or leading citizens or to meet them to discuse the

situation. Not a single arrest was made and the hooligans quietly went to their respective places after having done their job. The State took no steps whatever to restore confidence. All kinds of wild rumours were afloat, and it was freely mentioned that none of the Praja Mandal leaders and workers was safe. Some of the hooligans openly shouted the names of Praja Mandal leaders such as Nagarsheth and Sjt. Rasiklal Parikh, and threatened that they were out to murder them.

It became obvious that there was no safety of person or of property left in the State, nor any rule of law, and people voluntarily decided to leave the State, and started the "hijrat" from the 21st February.

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**RECEPTION OF PRAJA MANDAL WORKERS IN VILLAGES.**

**A well decorated Cart yoked by eight pairs of bullocks carried Paja Mandal Workers in a procession in the Village Siani. Sjt. Bhagwandas Harakhchand and Sjt. Durlabhji Umedchand and a local prominent Citizen of Shiani Sjt. Bhurabhai Oghadbhai are seen seated in the Cart.**

# CHAPTER VIII

## Migration and Extermination

### GALORE OF CONFISCATIONS AND FINES.

THE events described in the preceding Chapters were unprecedented in the history of Limbdi, or for the matter of that, for India. Equally unique and unprecedented was the reply of the people of Limbdi. Migration was the only non-violent reply to the organised goondaism on the part of the State. That is the only way of preventing a tryrant from becoming more tyranneous and inhuman. The brutality and the barbarism of the events of the 5th, 18th & 19th February left no alternative to the people but to leave the territories of a ruler who allowed goondas and dacoits to play havoc with his own subjects. The atrocities progressively increased until there was left no safety of person or property, nor any rule of law. The ruler had abdicated his power, and the Yuvraj had imbibed strange notions of dictatorships of the west. The trinity that ruled the palace, father and two sons, made no effort whatsoever to restore confidence in the people; six thousand people, therefore, left their home and hearth and properties worth lakhs of rupees to save their life. These included all classes and communities. Out of a population of about 13,000 in Limbdi City, about 5,000, men women and children, migrated to places of safety with their clothes on their person. About 60 peasant families migrated from the villages. The migrated included merchants, businessmen, tailors, goldsmiths, peasants; in short people of all classes and castes.

The interesting thing to note about the movement in Limbdi is that it was led by persons who had economically nothing to gain and everything to lose by the movement. The incidence of taxation in Limbdi State is heaviest in the villages, and is borne almost exclusively by the peasants. Out of a total revenue of nearly Rs. 8,00,000, Limbdi City with a population of 13,000 out of a total population of nearly 40,000, yields only Rs. 50,000, i.e. one anna in a rupee, Limbdi City has roads, electric lighting, water works, schools, hospital and other amenities of city life. The merchants of Limbdi, therefore, started and plunged in the movement entirely out of a spirit of self-sacrifice, and for the uplift of the down-trodden and heavily taxed peasantry. The villages of Limbdi have progressively been pauperised, and the the peasants have now become almost a class of proliteriat. The leaders of the movement were all merchants, having extensive business in Bombay, and each of them owning property worth thousands in Limbdi City. They were on a friendly relations with the royal family for a number of years, and were well-respected in the State. None of them had the faintest notion of the autocracy and despotism of which the Yuvraj showed himself capable. They were soon completely disillusioned, and

voluntarily led the migration, which was decided upon under the advice of Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Durbar Gopaldas.

It was hoped that after the migration, the atmosphere in Limbdi State would become quiet and peace will be restored. It was also expected that the royal family would take the opportunity of calmly pondering over the events of the preceeding two months and will show a change of heart, but that was not to be. Instead, the authorities thought it a good opportunity to root out the Praja Mandal, and to entirely crush the spirit of the people. They, therefore, embarked upon a reign of terror with a view to exterminate and ruin each one of those who was either a member or a sympathiser or who was even suspected of sympathising with, the Praja Mandal.

The mercantile community, as the only community politically conscious and, therefore, naturally in the vanguard of the movement, was the special target of his wrath. With the extermination of this community, the Yuvraj hoped, he could increase his hold upon the peasantry, and carry out his scheme of gaining greater control over the farmers.

Those of the merchants in the villages of the State, who had not migrated, were asked to leave, and were threatened with injury to their person and property if they did not. One after the other, the merchants in the villages were obliged to leave the territories of the State.

Some of the Brahmin teachers in the village of Hadala who were suspected to have taken part in the movement, were summarily dismissed. Some of the boarders of the Brahmin Boarding at Limbdi, who declined to work as volunteers of the Sanatan Mandal, met with the same fate. Almost all bania servants of the State were dismissed one after the other and those who had earned their pensions, forfeit the same. Their only crime was that they belonged to the mercantile community.

Then followed regular loot of the properties of those who had been turned out. The peasants and the merchants who owned lands and had cultivated the same during the previous year, had their crops ready for harvest, but they were not permitted to take the same and the crops were either confiscated or allowed to be stolen. The houses of some of those who had previously been robbed during the dacoities were again broken open, and everything found therein removed. In Shiani, the houses of many merchants were broken open, and every article in them was auctioned away, or allowed to be looted.

Then followed fines and confiscations of property. Heavy fines were imposed on those who had, at one stage or another, worked in the movement, or assisted it in any manner. The reader will find elsewhere a statement giving the details of these fines and confiscations. Petty officials in the villages had full license to harass those whom they disliked. One of the ways of harassment, for example, was to prevent the peasants or others who owned cattle, from taking their cattle out of the village for grazing, or to impound their cattle and recover heavy fines. In several

cases, properties of persons who had nothing to do with the movement, and who were residing elsewhere in British India or outside since a number of years were confiscated and auctioned away. Not a single merchant owning land was allowed to continue possession of his land. Farmers and others were asked not to pay any debt due by them to any of the merchants, and none could take any steps to recover their rightful dues.

The remarkable thing about all these methods of inflictions is that the State did not issue even a single written order or notice. Everything was done orally. In the case of those who were not present, no notice was given to them of the intended confiscation of their property, nor any intimation sent after confiscation. They learnt of it only if somebody happened to inform them of what had occurred. Some of the merchants in the village of Panshina did not leave the village in spite of orders to that effect. The State, therefore, issued an order to all barbers, potters, tailors, shephards, cobblers and all other classes to stop all services to these merchants. This lasted for about a fortnight. The object was to coerce the Praja Mandal workers through these merchants to abandon the boycott hereafter mentioned, and some of these merchants were compelled to go to the Praja Mandal leaders at Wadhwan Camp and to create ugly scenes at the Praja Mandal Office entirely against their wishes.

In the village of Hadala, Gator Patel owns land worth a lakh of rupees. He has also large timber business, and had a good stock of heavy timber on land which was claimed by the State to be its property. Gator Patel had firmly stood by the Praja Mandal, and therefore he was asked to remove all his timber within 24 hours. It would have been impossible to do so, but for the voluntary assistance of the villagers, and he removed all the timber within 3 days.

So far as Limbdi City was concerned, the merchants and others had left, leaving all their goods and property behind. Thereafter they attempted to remove their goods. The State promptly issued an order imposing a heavy export duty at the rate of one anna per rupee in order to prevent them from taking away their goods. This export duty was charged even on household articles that were removed and the reader will find elsewhere a specimen of a receipt issued for payment of such duty. The merchants were prepared to remove their goods even on payment of duty, but then another order was issued to the effect that these merchants cannot be permitted to open their shops.

The Praja Mandal, therefore, placed the whole case before the Indian Merchants' Chamber in Bombay, and the Secretary of the Chamber, under the authority of the Chamber's Committee, carried on correspondence with the Dewan Saheb. It was made plain in the correspondence also that the merchants were prepared to pay the export duty to remove their goods. But they were not permitted to do so. The reader will find printed elsewhere the said correspondence.

Some of the "hijaratis" occasionally went back to Limbdi to bring their household articles. Each one of them was surrounded by a group of hooligans, harassed and attacked and escaped with his life with difficulty. Even females, including vidows and children, who returned to Limbdi, were molested and insulted. Many inhabitants of Limbdi who were for years residing out of the State, were not permitted to return to the State even when their family, or parents or relatives were residing in Limbdi. White cap is the special object of attack. No person is permitted to enter Limbdi City with white cap on his head. White caps are forcibly snatched away. There is no rule of law left in the State and it is handed over to a mob which acts according to its own caprices, and there is nobody to whom any complaint can be made of such conduct.

The grossest case is that of Bai Chanchal, a brahmin widow, aged about 50. She is a resident of Shiani village. She was attacked and molested by a large unruly mob on the main thoroughfare of Limbdi City at noon, and her clothes were torn, and she was chased from place to place, stoned and abused. The mischief lasted for a couple of hours, and none dared to rescue her, nor did the police make any arrest or any effort to control the mob. When she returned to her village of Shiani, her fate was the worse. The goondas of Shiani turned her out of her home at night, dragged her to the outskirts of the village, threw her in mud-pond and she was severely belaboured and wounded. She was thereafter taken to Wadhwan Camp and thence to Ahmedabad for treatment. The reader will find elsewhere a copy of her statement.

Some of the leaders of the Praja Mandal were told that there was a possibility of a settlement with the ruler, but it was alleged that this could not be done because of certain personal allegations made against the ruler and against the Jagadish Ashram. None of the ersponsible leaders of the Praja Mandal had at any time made any such allegation. In fact, it was repeatedly made plain that the Praja Mandal had nothing to say against the ruler personally. Even so, with a view to leave no room for excuse, the Praja Mandal issued a statement declaring that it had no grievance personaliy against the ruler, and that it respected all places of worship of every community and that no allegation against the Jagadish Ashram had been made. Similarly, it was stated that certain reports in some of the newspapers were the cause of the tense atmosphere. Here again, it would be plain to anybody that the Praja Mandal can accept no responsibility except for statements issued by itself. Even so, to clear the atmosphere the Praja Mandal issued a statement that it would accept responsibility only for the statements issued by itself.

However, these were excuses to continue the reign of terror and repression. In fact, the trinity that ruled the palace and particularly the Yuvraj had decided to uproot the Praja Mandal and to crush the spirit of the people, and therefore refused to countenance any move for peace. In fact, the Yuvraj is reported to have said that he considered "those who

had migrated, to be his enemies". It is needless to comment on the mentality of a ruler who can regard his own people who had left the State only due to unbearable brutality and for want of protection, as his enemies.

The 7th day of July 1939 was the birthday of the Thakore Saheb, and it was expected that on an occasion so auspicious as that, he would take the opportunity of making some pronouncement to restore peace and confidence. Efforts were made for that purpose. But that was not to be. Instead, at the birthday durbar, those who had assisted the State in the campaign of repression, and distinguished themselves in it, were rewarded by titles and presents.

The repression increased day by day. Shops of merchants were broken open and all goods found in the shops worth thousands were removed. No notice was given to the merchants of the intended action, nor any intimation after the goods were taken away. It was nothing short of a regular loot by the State without any pretence of law.

A large number of people who had left the State did so because there was no safety of person or property. They naturally expected that peace and quiet would soon be restored, or at least after sometime, it would be possible for them to return in safety. All of them naturally were not in a position to face complete economic ruin. They were, therefore, anxious to return back. The State, however would not let them come back except on its own terms of complete humiliation. Hopes were held out to them that if they resigned from the Praja Mandal, and signed certain printed statements denouncing the Praja Mandal, they would be permitted to return. They succumbed to this inducement. But their humiliation was not complete. In spite of their having signed such statements, a number of them were not permitted to return.

The State has set up a sort of a dummy committee to determine and impose fines on those desiring to return. Heavy fines are imposed as the reader will find from a statement given elsewhere. Some of the people out of sheer helplessness and on account of circumstances beyond their control have paid such fines.

In spite of the brutality and barbarism of this reign of terror, about 3,000 persons are still on hijrat. The appeals of Mahatma Gandhi to the ruler to make peace with his people have fallen on deaf years. The reader will find elsewhere articles by Mahatma Gandhi which apparently have had no effect.

The Praja Mandal, after the "hijrat", appealed to the people of India in general, and the Merchants and Mill-owners in particular, for an economic boycott of Limbdi State goods and especially cotton. The response to this appeal has been very splendid, and in spite of strenuous efforts and tempting inducements on the part of the State and its agents, since last nine months they have not succeeded in selling the State cotton except a few hundred bales. The success of the boycott of cotton is the measure of the indigna-

tion of the people of India at the heartless and inhuman atrocities perpetrated in Limbdi. The boycott obviously could have had no success if all classes and communities and particularly the entire mercantile community of India and Mill-owners had not responded to the appeal of the Praja Mandal. The boycott still continues as effective as ever. It is really a boycott by the people of British India to show their indignation The city of Bombay has set up a very influential committee to organise and maintain the boycott. In fact, the boycott is more an activity of the people of India rather than that of the Limbdi Praja Mandal.

The Paramount Power has remained a silent spectator of this rule of barbarism. It does not appear to be conscious of any duty towards the people of Limbdi. Telegrams and appeals to H. E. the Crown Representative and the Resident at Rajkot have remained unanswered, and have been in vain. The lives and properties of thousands of people are at stake. And yet the Paramount Power has not moved even its little finger to stop or miligate the ruthless repression.

# CHAPTER IX

## "Constitutional Reforms"

REFERENCE has been made in the previous chpaters to the scheme prepared by the Yuvraj which he was bent upon enforcing. The State has also issued some notifications "granting" so-called reforms. A press message from Rajkot dated 30th October 1939 reporting the Kathiawar Rulers' Conference stated: "The Rulers also considered the reform proposals for Limbdi State, and congratulated the Yuvraj on having gone several steps further in liberalising the State administration than Rajkot." It is, therefore, necessary that the reader should have some idea of the so-called reforms. To those who have followed the previous Chapters, it will be obvious that the talk of reforms is meant only for consumption abroad. To the people of Limbdi, it is a cruel mockery when even the elementary rights of civil liberty are denied.

The scheme which the Yuvraj had framed was a scheme for what he called rural reconstruction. Briefly the scheme was this: there was to be a State Bank called Khedut (cultivator) Bank. Initially it was to be financed by the State, and the State was to appoint a person to manage it. The Bank was to take over the entire produce of every farmer, and was to sell the same. Out of the sale proceeds, 30% were to be paid towards State revenue, and the remaining 70% was to be credited to the cultivator, out of which he was to be provided with the daily necessities of his life and the materials for cultivation. The khedut was to be prohibited from having any monetary dealing whatsoever with anybody except the Bank, and he was bound to purchase from the Bank everything that he needed, from salt to premium for wife and from seed to bullock. Any monetary dealing by the cultivator with anyone other than the Bank was to be made illegal. Out of the 70% to be credited to the cultivator, 50% was to be utilised for his necessities of life and agriculture; 15% was to be credited for payment of his dues which were to be settled and the remaining 5% to meet the expenses of the Bank. The State was to receive a clear 25% of the produce and the remaining 5% was to go towards a Revenue Equalisation Fund to be utilised for payment of State revenues in times of famine and scarcity. As the Equalisation Fund increased, the State revenue was also to increase to be made good out of that fund. After the debts of the cultivator were liquidated, the 15% to his credit were to be utilised to compel him to purchase the shares of the Bank. The annual net profits of the Bank were to be utilised to pay a small commission to the employees of the Bank, the building up of a reserve fund and dividends to shareholders, and the surplus of the profits were to be utilised for promotion of works of charity or of general utility and benefit to the

whole village. The entire cost of education, social welfare and rural reconstruction was to be met out of the annual net profits of the Bank.

It will be obvious that this scheme had principally two objects in view: one, to insure uninterrupted and increasing payment of State revenues even in times of famine and scarcity, and two, to obatin complete control and mastery over the life of the peasant by taking over his produce and controlling all his activities of life. It is to be remembered that no cash payment was to be made to the cultivator even out of the sale proceeds of his produce, but the State Bank was to give him everything that he needed, and it was to be paid for out of the amount to his credit. The State recognised no obligation to spend a single penny out of the revenues it received, but the village welfare was to be provided for out of the surplus annual net profits of the Bank!

It is needless to go into the details of this scheme. This meant complete slavery for the peasants, and this was the scheme for which the Yuvraj wanted dictatorial powers to work. He has adamant that under no circumstances would he permit the Praja Mandal workers to go to the villages. It is this scheme which slowly and surely he is attempting to press forward and implement. Under the guise of removing the middleman's profit, the object was to coerce the peasant to sumbit to complete state control.

In order to enforce the scheme, the Yuvraj conceived the idea of Village Panchayats which has already been described. Having taken loyalty pledges by coercion, he started what he calls Village Panchayts, and in the name of these Village Panchayats, he has begun controlling the life of every village. The Village Panchayats have become another engine of repression, and another tool in the hands of the State to complete its hold on the peasant.

Politically, for a small state like Limbdi, having only one City and 39 villages and a population of 40,000, the Yuvraj had the grandiose idea of a Federation. He talked of local self-government to the City and every village, and a Federation in a Raja Sabha, of all the self-governing bodies. These bodies were to be constituted entirely on a communal franchise, each *caste* having its representatives. The idea was to carry to perfection the policy of "divide and rule". The Yuvraj believes that democracy is entirely unsuited to the natural genius of the people of Limbdi.

In order to make an appearance of granting political reforms, he made vague declarations from time to time. One such declaration was made on 10th January 1939. The reader will find elsewhere a copy of the said declaration. By that declaration, the Yuvraj offered to appoint a Committee of Eight, three to be selected by the Praja Mandal of whom one should be a farmer, three to be selected by the Sanatan Mandal of whom one should be a farmer and two to be appointed by the State. This Committee was to be an advisory body to frame a constitution suited to the

natural genius and aspirations of the people. The constitution so framed was then to be placed before the people of Limbdi in such manner as may be advised by the said Committee in order to ascertain whether the said constitution was suited to the natural genius and aspirations of the people. The notification added that the State could give no indication as to the kind of constitution that will be framed, but that the Yuvraj himself had in mind a sort of a Federation. The notification further added: "The people are being told in public meetings to be ready for a fight against the State, if necessary, to obtain responsible government. Such propaganda is harmful to the harmonious relations that exist between the State and the people. Not only that, but such propaganda is unnecessary when the State is prepared to frame a constitution according to the wishes of the people, and therefore there is no need for any propaganda in the villages. *If, therefore, the said propaganda is discontinued in Limbdi city, and if the Praja Mandal and the Sanatan Mandal assure the State that they will do no propaganda in the villages, and if both the institutions appoint their representatives for the Advisory Committee, the work of the Advisory Committee will begin immediately.*"

It is needless to comment on the above declaration. Its want of bona fides is evident in the condition that is sought to be imposed as a preliminary to the appointment of an Advisory Committee. It contained no promise of transfer of any power to the people, nor any promise that the recommendations of the Advisory Committee will be implemented, but the worst thing was that it made it a condition precedent that the Praja Mandal should discontinue all its political activities. There was no such question for the Sanatan Mandal, as it was a creature of the State. The Praja Mandal workers stated that they had no objection to any steps that may be taken by the State to introduce political reforms, but that they could not agree to any condition to abandon all its activities. The object obviously was to gain time. Of course, nothing was done after this notification, as nothing was intended to be done.

Another notification was issued on 16-2-1939, which has already been referred to in Chapter VII. That notification inter alia stated:—"The best and speedy remedy of procuring for every village the natural benefits and rights obtained by the establishment of Village Panchayats is *that the Praja Mandal should stop all its activities and abandon the idea of holding a parishad. On this being done,* a peasants' conference, consisting of the representatives of Village Panchayats, will be called at an early opportunity to consider the usual matters connected with the farmers.

"Some time ago, the State had declared that it would appoint an advisory body to frame a proper constitution. This offer was not accepted, and thereafter the State having adopted a policy of Village panchayats in every village after consultation with the elected representatives of each village, *there is now no need for such an advisory committee.* But in order

to give local self-government to Limbdi City, the State will soon appoint an Advisory Committee consisting of eight members and a president. Four members of this Committee shall be appointed by the Sanatan Mandal and four will be non-official members, out of whom one shall be a Mohamedan and the State will appoint the Chairman."

The Praja Mandal finds no place in this picture. In the previous notification, the Praja Mandal was given the right to appoint three members on the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee now contemplated was only to frame a Municipal constitution for the City of Limbdi. The idea of any political constitution is abandoned. Here again, there is no promise of any transfer of power to the people nor any promise that the recommendations of the Committee will be implemented. All the memebrs of the Committee were in fact to be appointed by the State. This notification, however, was only meant to prevent the parishad being held, and to find an excuse to break the parishad. We have already described the events that followed within the next few days after this notification was issued. The notification was not intended to serve any other purpose.

Another notication was issued on 25th March 1939, after the migration. The reader will find a copy of that notification elsewhere. It is worth a study. That notification recited the notification of 16-2-1939. It added that the Sanatan Mandal had asked for liberty to appoint six instead of 4 members, and that was granted, and the State appointed five non-officials. The notification added, "On the recommendations of the above Committee, a City Council will be established. And after a village Panchayat is established in every village, the ideal of the Yuvraj Saheb to frame a Federal constitution for the City and every village enjoying local self-government will become possible. But the time has come to consider what kind of Federal constitution will be suited to the natural genius and aspirations of the people, and to consider what procedure should be followed in order to prepare such a constitution, and therefore the State has decided to call a conference of the leaders of the people." The notification then proceeds to say that the eleven members of the City Advisory Committee mentioned above will be invited to take part in this conference, and representatives of the Village Panchayats as mentioned in the said notification will be elected to the said conference. The notification proceeds to give the number of representatives to be elected by each group of villages, numbering in all eleven. It then adds that six more members will be added by the State to represent the various communities and interests such as Bhayats, Garasias, Brahmins, etc. The Village Panchayats were invited to elect representative by 10th April 1939, and the notification ended by saying that thereafter, the conference will be called at the earliest opportunity.

It is relavant to remember that at this time more than six thouasnd

people of Limbdi including leading citizens were on "hijrat". The notification is as vague at it possibly can be. It contemplates a conference to *consider the procedure as to how a constitution should be framed, and to consider what kind of constitution will be suited to the natural genius and aspirations of the people.* What the natural genius of the people is, nobody knows except the Yuvraj. The composition of the conference is another curious part of this notification. They are all, in effect, State nominees, and even so, important villages of the Bhal District have been deliberately omitted from being given the right to send their representatives, because those were the villages which stood foremost in the fight, and where the farce of Village Panchayats could not be carried out.

The public do not know what the Advisory Committee of eleven did and the conference never met. But the State arranged a show. A darbar was held on the 27th day of July 1939 when the Yuvraj made an eloquent speech, and the "representatives" of the people presented an address to the Thakore Saheb congratulating him on his establishing a City Council.

Nothing further has happened thereafter except that ruthless and brutal repression has increased day after day. These are the political reforms for which the Rulers of Kathiawar congratulated the Yuvraj of Limbdi on having gone several steps further in liberalising the administration than Rajkot. At this conference of the Rulers of Kathiawar, they also complimented the Thakore Saheb of Rajkot and his adviser Darbar Viravalla on the reforms which they had announced for Rajkot. Another show is arranged to take place at Limbdi on 1st December 1939 when Limbdi State authorities will seek the approval of the Princes to a scheme of reforms for Limbdi State. The people of Limbdi do not know of any scheme of reforms, and it is unnecessary for them to know the same. The Rulers of Kathiawar may continue self-complacently to congratulate one another on "liberalising" their State administrations. The people of Kathiawar, like the people of Limbdi, know too well what a cruel mockery these so-called reforms are.

It is relevant to add that the Praja Mandal of Limbdi had made no specific demand for any political reforms. It had declared that its goal was the attainment of responsible Government under aegis of the Ruler but that its immediate programme was only to establish contact with the people and to educate them. That was precisely what the State authorities in Limbdi did not want to be done and effectively prevented from being done. Where is the question of political reforms when even the elementary rights of civil liberty are denied? What was the value of vague notifications containing high sounding words, like 'Federation' and 'local self-government' when the condition precedent was that the Praja Mandal should abandon all its activities? No one is likely to be misled by such propaganda, least of all the people of Limbdi who know what this local self-government in action means.

# "Age No Bar and Sex No Protection"

Terrible tale of Bai Chanchal.

A Poignant Scene in Limbdi Tragedy

Orgy of unrestrained Goondaism

THE ordeal which Prajamandal Workers are made to face at the hands of Limbdi goondas is well typified in the sufferings of Bai Chanchal. Chanchalbahen Waghji is a Brahmin by Caste and is a worker. She took part in the national struggle in 1930-32. Lately she participated actively in the Rajkot fight. In Limbdi she began working under the Prajamandal as a lady volunteer.

Sometime late in the months of May in the Course of a Journey she fell into the hands of Limbdi goondas. She was subjected to all ugly forms of mob violence. Neither her age nor her sex was to her a protection. A band of heartless hooligans marched her up and down with repeated assaults and indignities. And the physical sufferings of a frail woman were accentuated by the ribald jokes and mocking laughter of the group of ruffians. Friends and relatives could not protect her; stranger could not give her refuge; and the State Police turned away from her.

A loyal supporter of the Limbdi Durbar took pity on the unfortunate victim of such inhuman persecution but the jeering crowds would not be baulked of their prey. They besieged his house and indulged in demonstrations. They threw stones broke some window panes in the house and the electric bulbs in some of the rooms. He sought the intervention of a State Police Official who prevented further untoward happenings. Referring to Bai Chanchal's statement in regard to those incidents the above mentioned gentleman says in a letter to a prominent Kathiawad

worker that the "statement is not exaggerated, it is fourteen annas in a rupee."

It was only a just recompense ordained by merciful Providence, when after passing through a second ordeal, she had the unique good fortune to be consoled by Mahatma Gandhi himself. Greatly concerned over her injuries Prajamandal Volunteers were taking her to Ahmedabad for treatment. Mahatmaji was travelling by the same train from Wadhwan to Bombay. At Viramgam Station Bai Chanchal was taken to his compartment. He was moved by her sufferings and made kindly enquiries. He spoke to her words of comfort and instilled into her mind fresh courage.

## BAI CHANCHAL'S STATEMENT

The following is a statement recorded by the Prajamandal narrating the sufferrings she had undergone.

*(English translation of a statement of Bai Chanchal)*

I Bai Chanchal Waghji Brahmin by caste aged 49 resident of Siani (A village in Limbdi State) state as follows:—

On Jeth Sudi 11th (29-5-39) I left Siani by Bus to go to Mojidad (another village of Limbdi State). When I reached Limbdi I started to go to a carpenter along the lake. On the way 5 or 10 Brahmin boys met me and began joking with me "where is your father". I replied "I do not know. You may find him out if you like." Then they began to throw dust on me. As I progressed further they followed me and continued throwing dust at me. The crowd increased as I went on. When I tried to sit on the road they beat me. While I turned on the way to go by another route, they took me by the neck and drew me to the Bazar. Slowly 150 to 200 persons assembled. I was taken to Sukal Lane via the lake. Then they took me to the lodge near the house of Fozdar Jatashankar and then they dragged me to another lane.

All the time they were throwing dust at me and beating me by fists and kicks and throwing at me pieces of tiles and rags and they put on my neck a basket. Bhawanishankar Shastri met the crowd near Jatashankar's house and requested the crowd to disperse; but they all told him "you better keep back otherwise you will be injured". They dragged him away by the hand.

Proceeding further to Chitra lane Rukmini Prabhashankar Achaarya

of Siani who was staying there, came out and told the crowd "Please do not beat my sister" and she prayed them on their knees. She was also told to keep back, otherwise her house would be attacked. Near the School I was made to wait and my clothes were torn. The crowd had by now increased to about 400 persons and on the way were throwing stones at me and I was thrown on the ground frequently being taken by the neck. Some of these persons were touching my breast and had torn off the buttons of my blouse. They were crying "Surpanakha (Ravan's sister) has come. Cut off her nose."

In this way they brought me back to 'green Chowk' and there I ran to the Police Chowki and told the policeman to protect me. The police was there near the gate. I can recognise them by sight. Some one from the crowd whispered something to the policeman and he therefore asked me to leave the police Chowki. He told me that he would accompany me and thus persuaded me to go with him. He walked with me a little distance and then went away. While I was sitting at the Police Chowki persons from the crowd were jostling each other and falling on me and fell on the ground. While I was attempting to get up I was again pushed and was prostrated.

Just opposite there was the shop of a tailor named Popat from Siani and I ran to his shop and sat there. I requested him to protect me. The crowd shouted to turn me out. Mr. Popat therefore asked me to leave.

After I had walked a little distance I saw, Jugjivan Ujamsi Talsania. He came to me and he was soon surrounded and was jostled. He however took me to his house. The crowd in the meantime surrounded his house and shouted his boycott. Stones were thrown at Mr. Talsania's house and his window panes and electric bulbs were broken. At this time I recognised the following persons in the crowd.

(1) The son of the Mukhiaji of the Haveli.

(2) Son of the Vaccinator.

(3) Son of Hathirambhai.

(4) Chiman Shukal.

Amongst the crowd were two to five Garasias, and others were Brahmins. I can recognise them by sight but I do not know their names. Mr. Durgashankar Acharya came to Talsania's house and dispersed the crowd. He told me "why do you take part in such things? You should keep at home." At Talsania's house I was unconscious for some time.

Thereafter two policemen came and took me to the Motor Bus for Siani and I went back to Siani where I stayed for two days with my mother.

At my mother's place a crowd came and they began to throw dust and stones at me. Hearing my cries my uncle Diveshwar Mavji (who presided at a meeting under the auspices of the Praja Mandal) came there. It was about 10 p. m.

Diveshwar Mavji remonstrated with the crowd. The crowd went back to the *Kacheri* and again went to the house of Diveshwar Mavji. His Dhotar was torn off and he was beaten. He sat down as his Dhotar had been removed and as he sat down he was beaten and he went on repeating "*Ram Ram*". Diveshwarbhai is about 75 years old. His son shouted and son Balashankar Pranjivan and Prabhashankar Balashankar came there and saved Diveshwarbhai. I had escaped and had hidden myself behind a door of Budhia's house in Balashankar lane. The Crowd soon found me out and I was pushed out and 8 or 10 persons lifted me by the hand and feet. I shouted but all persons in the lane shut up their doors. Only the Head Master was out. I was taken to the outskirts of the village and on the way was thrown on the ground and dragged and again made to rise. At the out-skirts I was asked to walk and while I was walking I was frequently beaten by the neck and pushed and was profoundly beaten with kicks and fists. After we crossed the village well they beat me with sticks. They were crying "you are being taken to be married to a bachelor." Besides that they were abusing me in foul language. As I went further they were beating me with sticks and I became unconscious.

When I regained consciousness after some time they picked me up and threw me in a mud pond where the dirty water from the well collects and where the buffaloes lie.

After I was thrown in the ditch I was asked to come out but I was unable to do so. They then began to beat me with sticks where I was standing.

With great difficulty I came out I soon fainted and sat down. I vomitted blood and fell down.

Being disgusted with my condition I was going towards the well to commit suicide. Then they pretended to take pity on me as if they were strangers and prevented me and then took me back to my house and left me there. I reached my house at about 12 O'clock at night where I again vomitted blood three times.

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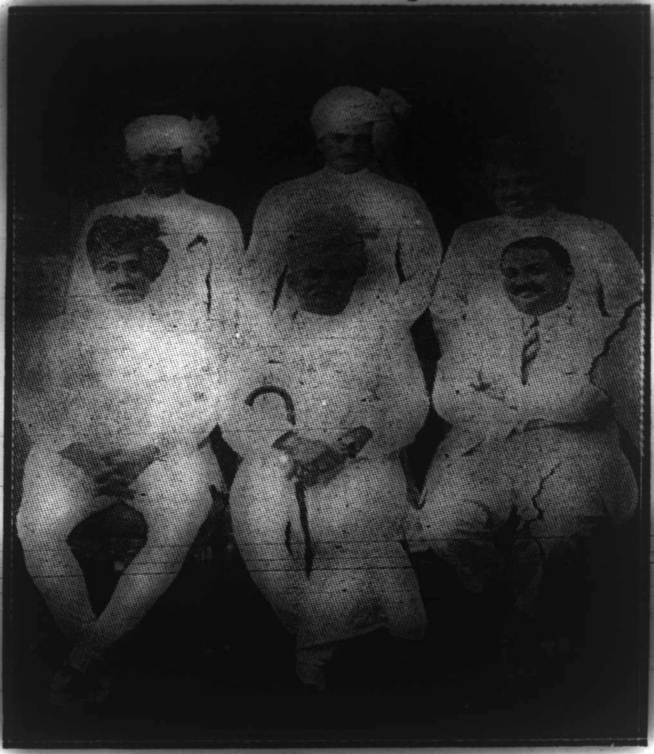
# STORY OF LIMBDI GANGSTERISM : : : : IN PICTURES : : : :

## THE ROYAL FAMILY OF LIMBDI



**For them, the Tiller tills the Earth;**
**For them, the Peasant works and starves!**

(Sitting: first from the right is the heir apparent and second, is His Highness of Limbdi. Standing: first from the right is the third Prince and Dewan of Limbdi, other two are the remaining two Princes of Limbdi. Sitting on the left is H. H. The Rana Saheb of Porbander and son-in-law of Limbdi).

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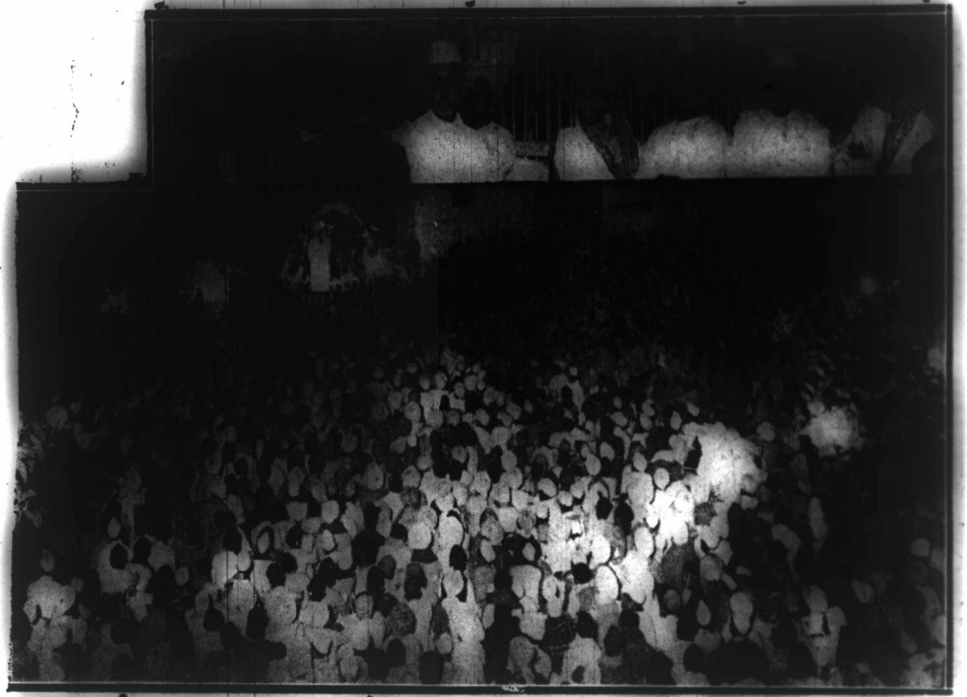

Thousands gather to hear the tidings of Freedom to come. Meeting held on 31st Dec. 1938, attended by thousands:

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Hooliganism began with attacks on Prajā Mandal's motor cars touring the villages. The first motor that was attacked was that of Bhaktilaxmiba, wife of Darbar Gopaldas at Jambu. Second one at Shiani where this motor was stopped by gangsters by putting some obstacle in the way. Then all the glass, tyres, tubes and hood were smashed. The driver and volunteers who were inside were beaten till they were unconscious. They were left there. One man was frightened to death.

## PANSINA DACOITY

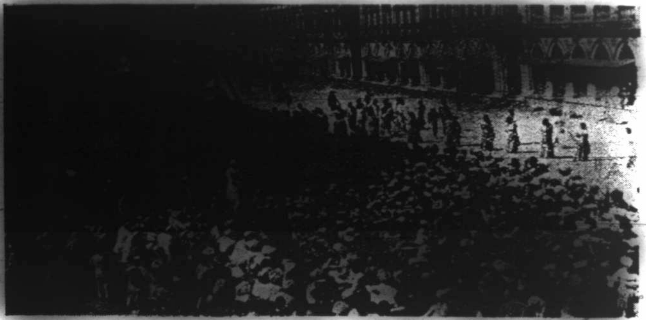
A cloth shop looted in Pansina. Every thing taken away. Only vacant stands and sundry things are lying in the shop.

A house looted: Iron clad boxes broken and made vacant. Only things left in the house are seen lying at the door of the house.

## VICTIMS OF DACOITS FURY

**Old and wel-todo men who were workers and office bearers of the Panshina branch of Praja Mandal were wounded. One of them was wounded by the sword. He had to be treated for fifteen days as an indoor patient in the State hospital.**

## LIMBDI CITIZEN'S CRY FOR JUSTICE.



**Protest meeting in Limbdi. People marched to the State palace and went on hunger strike and sat there day and night for four days.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen sitting at the gate of the Palace.**

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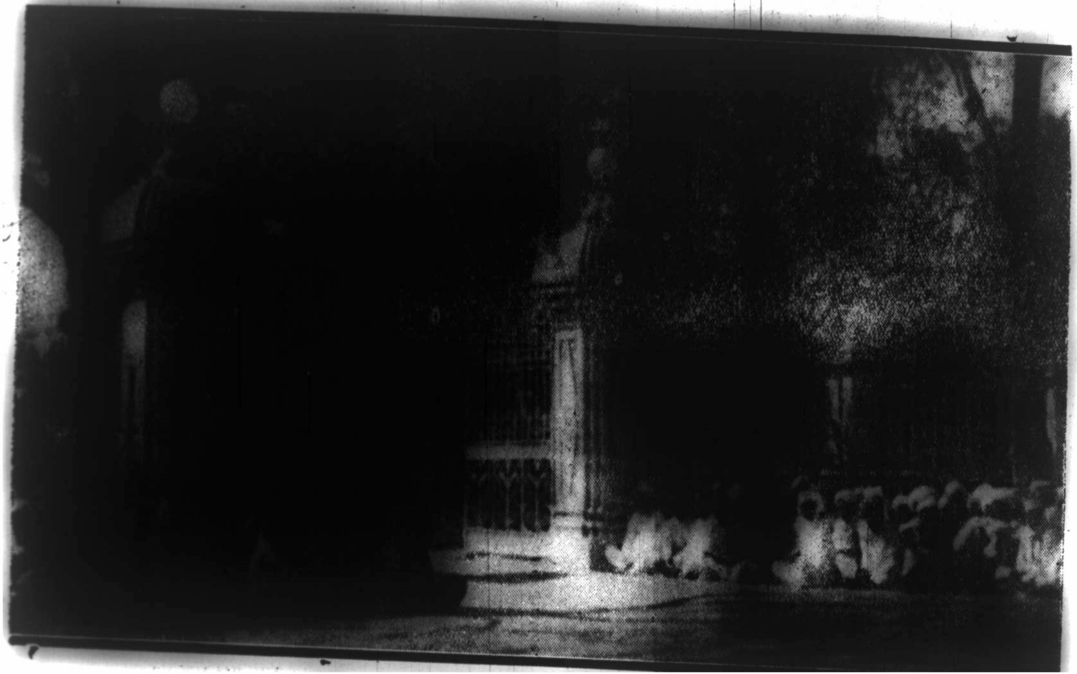
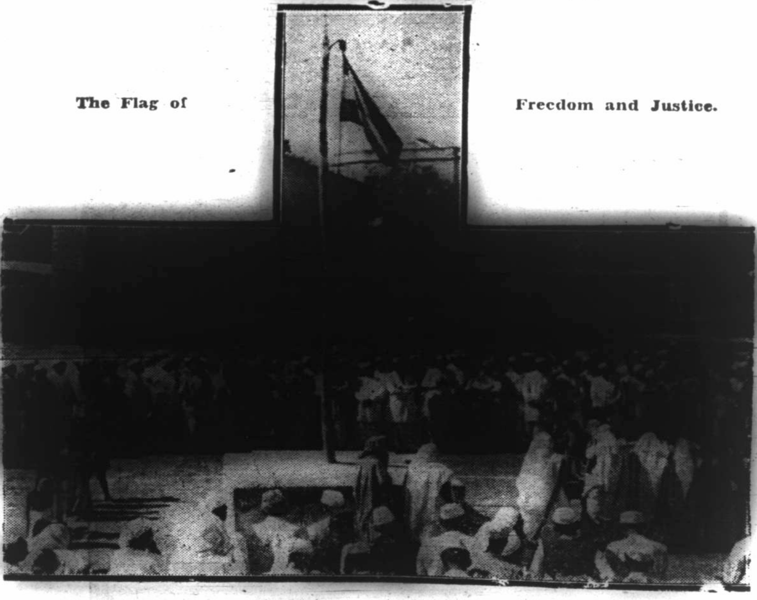
RELIEF FOR THE VICTIMS AND PUNISHMENT FOR CRIMINALS

Limbdi Citizens' Demand.



PROMINENT CITIZENS. AT THE PALACE GATE.

**"ZANDA UNCHA RAHE HAMARA"**



The Flag of Freedom and Justice.

**During four days Satyagraha at the palace gate, everyday flag salutation was going on.**

## HUNGER-STRIKERS' MEETING AT THE PALACE GATE.

:0:

Villagers and Citizens meet together.

**A HUMAN STREAM FLOWING**

**IN THE DELEGATES' CAMPS**

On occasion of the Conference. Delegates from villages coming to .Limbdi . on foot. .They are marching on the bridge. just .at the gate of Limbdi.

**CONFERENCE DELEGATES' CAMP**

One of the Camp where village delegates to the Conference were accomodated with their carts and horses.

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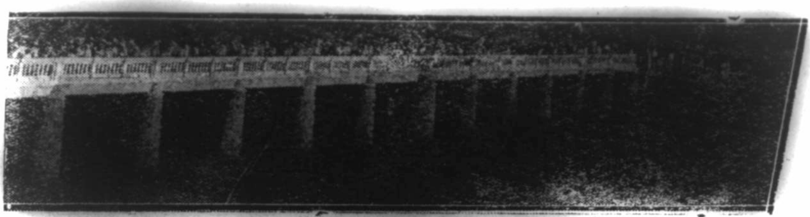
OVER THE BRIDGE



WELCOME BROTHERS!

Village delegates who came marching, are being received by Limbdi people in the form of a procession.

ON CART AND HORSE

Villagers arriving at Limbdi for the Conference.

## UNDER THE GOONDA FLAG

A band of goondas going to the Conferenec pandal. They are in a militant mood, and lathies in their hands. Though lathis were prohibited by the state that day. At the head of the gang, people with uniform are seen quite clearly.

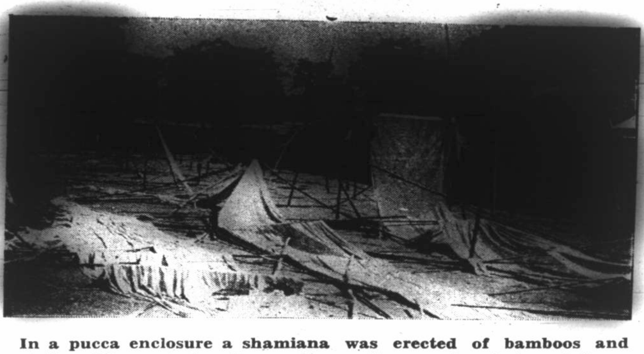
## UP THE LADDER OF CRIME

How the goondas entered the pucca enclosure of the Conference pandal. This is the back side of the Pandal.

## DOWN THRO' HOLES IN THE ROOF

They also entered by breaking this roof as shown in this photo.

## THE GOONDAS' HAND



In a pucca enclosure a shamiana was erected of bamboos and cloth. After entering the enclosure, the goondas destroyed it.

## CAMP OF PRESIDENT-ELECT SURROUNDED BY HOOLIGANS.

President-elect of the Conference, Darbar Gopaldas, is a very prominent worker of Gujerat. His Camp in Limbdi was situated on the trunk road. It was surrounded by a band of hooligans led and organised by a brother of a prominent officer and one state servant of Shiani fame.

## BATTERED BODIES AND TATTERED CLOTHES

Village delegates who were severely beaten.The time of the conference was two O'clock. So about eight hundred village delegates having arrived earlier, taking rest under the shade of Conference pandal. The gangsters entered the Pandal and assaulted all of them, having wounded 700. Within closed doors, they were beaten. The clothes of many of them taken away. When the doors were thrown open, many were unable to move out. The people who could run away were chased, made naked and were wounded by the gangsters. Some ran out of the city and some fainted on the way. Praja Mandal workers brought them to the hospital and treated them.

## LATHI RAJ IN LIMBDI

Some Of The Wounded
Here the wounds are so deep that even in photoes we can see clearly



## DELEGATES SERIOUSLY WOUNDED

These three were in precarious condition and had to be treated in State hospital as indoor patients. They had to be treated in other hospitals for months.

# LATHI RAJ IN LIMBDI

## THE LATHI KNEW NOT YOUNG OR OLD

Old man beaten. His leg is broken.

Some boys were also beaten severely.

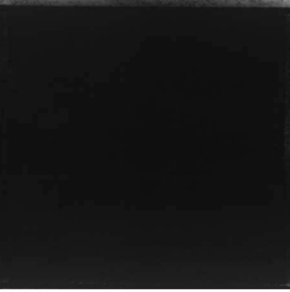
A Delegate Streaming Blood.

At the back signs of lathies are very clear.

AMEULANCE MEN AT WORK

BOYS BEING CARRIED TO HOSPITAL.

SIGNS OF WOUNDS IN THE BACK



This old man is wounded at three places at a time. Head-chest & leg.

STATE Dr. DRESSING THE WOUNDED

SERIOUSLY WOUNDED TAKEN ON THE STRATURE.

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HIS SKULL WAS
NOT HIS RE

VICTIM TO GOONDA
BLOOD-LUST

This old man was
in the building
Mandal which is a
the trunk road and
posite the Courts.

ONE MORE VICTIM OF GOONDA BLOOD-LUST

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# IN LIMBDI

## ...G OF OLD

...dreaming

At the back signs of lathies are very clear.

**VICTIM TO GOONDA BLOOD-LUST**

**HIS SKULL WAS BROKEN, NOT HIS RESOLVE**

**This old man was attacked in the building of Praja Mandal which is situated on the trunk road and just opposite the Courts.**

**ONE MORE VICTIM OF GOONDA BLOOD-LUST**

**HOSPITALS IN HOMES!**
**The number of the wounded people was so great that they had to be treated in some private houses over and above two state hospitals and one private hospital.**

## TREATMENT IN THE STREET

**Doctors had come from adjoining cities to treat the patients. Here is Dr. Patadia of Wadhwan treating the wounded in a street.**

# OLD AND YOUNG ALL COME UNDER THE GOONDA'S ROD

BLOOD OF BRAVE LITTLE BOYS.

The conference was held in the enclosed open space of a Boarding house. The students of this boarding were beaten. When the first batch of Praja Mandal workers went there, these students were weeping together near this pool of blood. Heads of some of them were broken. The furniture of the boarding is broken.

## CAME.....................................TO SEE BUT REMAINED TO SERVE

Mrs. Munshi and Sjt. Jivanlal Diwan carrying the wounded in a motor buss.

# EVEN, THE WOUNDED WERE NOT LEFT FREE!

This is the private hospital of Dr. Popatlal Sanghvi where many wounded were treated. The hospital is situated in the biggest market and on the trunk road of Limbdi. Even then this hospital was often attacked. The Building had to be protected by a Cordon.

# DER THE GOONDA'S ROD

## CAME..............................TO SEE BUT REMAINED TO SERVE

Mrs. Munshi and Sjt. Jivanlal Diwan carrying the wounded in a motor buss.

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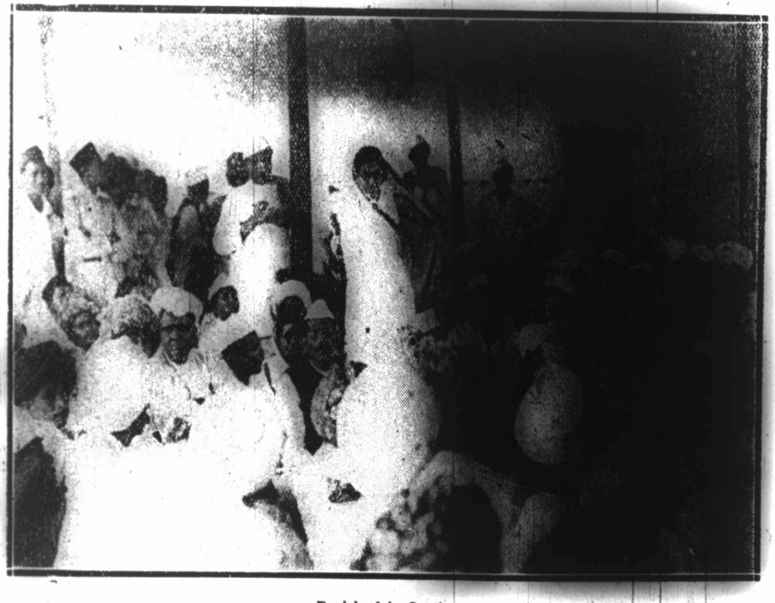
# EVEN THE WOUNDED WERE NOT LEFT FREE!

**This is the private hospital of Dr. Popatlal Sanghvi where many wounded were treated. The hospital is situated in the biggest market and on the trunk road of Limbdi. Even then this hospital was often attacked. The Building had to be protected by a Cordon.**

# CRY FOR LIBERTY THAT COULD NOT BE CRUSHED

Mr. Rasiklal Parikh is seen in the Conference pruposing the resolution of responsible Government as aim.

# VOICE OF FREEDOM COULD NOT BE HUSHED



Parishad in Session.

Inspite of all this, Conference was held at the declared time. The president elect being surrounded by the gangsters in his building, Mrs. Lilavati Munshi was elected president. She is seen here giving her opening address in the Conference.

# THE HIJARAT BEGINS

## Limbdi's Children leave their Land

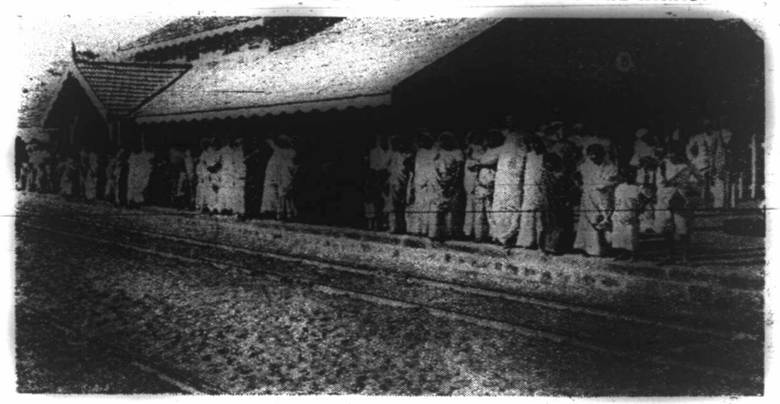
**"TREMBLING, SHRINKING FROM THE SPOILERS' HAND"**

**FAREWELL TO HOME AND LAND**

**Limbdi Hijratis Leaving the Town.**

WILDERNESS IS PARADISE WHEN LIMBDI IS THE HOME OF LOOF

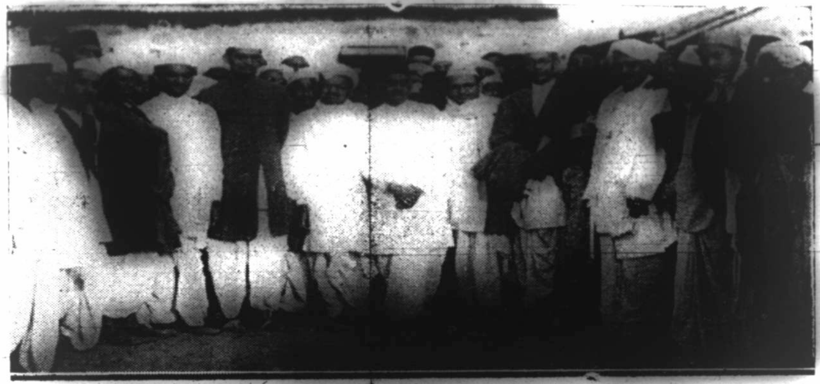
Lady Migrators bidding good-bye to their hearths and homes:



AT THE RAILWAY STATION



## GREAT HEARTED NEIGHBOURS WELCOME THE HOMELESS



Hijratis being received by the leading-citizens in nearly towns.

## TEA AND TIFFIN ON THE WAY SIDE

At the railway stations in the way the Hijratis are being served with tea and breakfast.

# THEY TREK AWAY FROM THE TYRANTS' RULE

Farmers Leaving State.

# AWAY! AWAY!!

Limbdi Farmers in search of Peace and Freedom.

# IN IMPROVISED HOMES AT HIJARATNAGAR, ARNEJ

Temporary huts built for the Hijarati peasants. They are seen residing there with their Cattle.

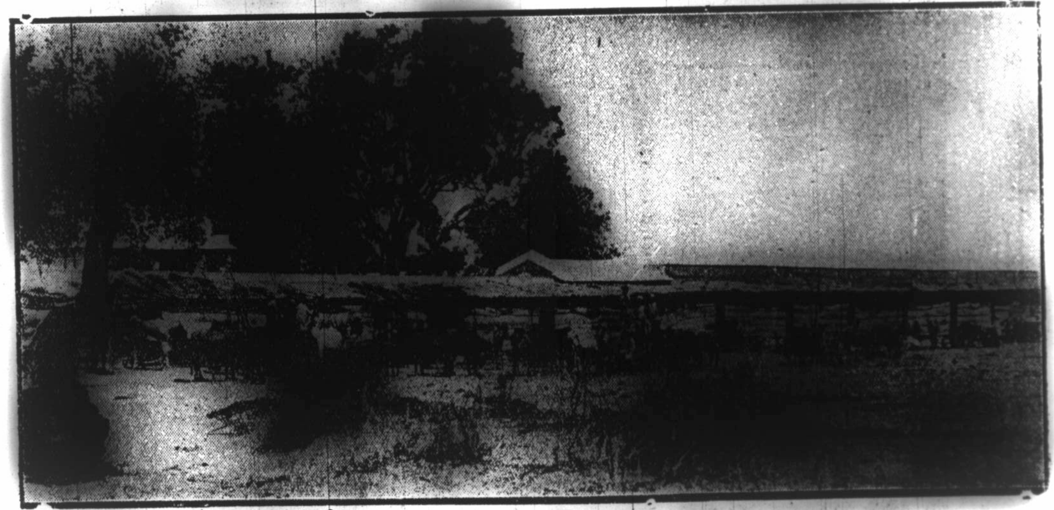
# M THE TYRANTS' RULE

ng State.

# AWAY!!

F Peace and Freedom.

## IN IMPROVISED HOMES AT HIJARATNAGAR, ARNEJ



Temporary huts built for the Hijarati peasants. They are seen residing there with their Cattle.



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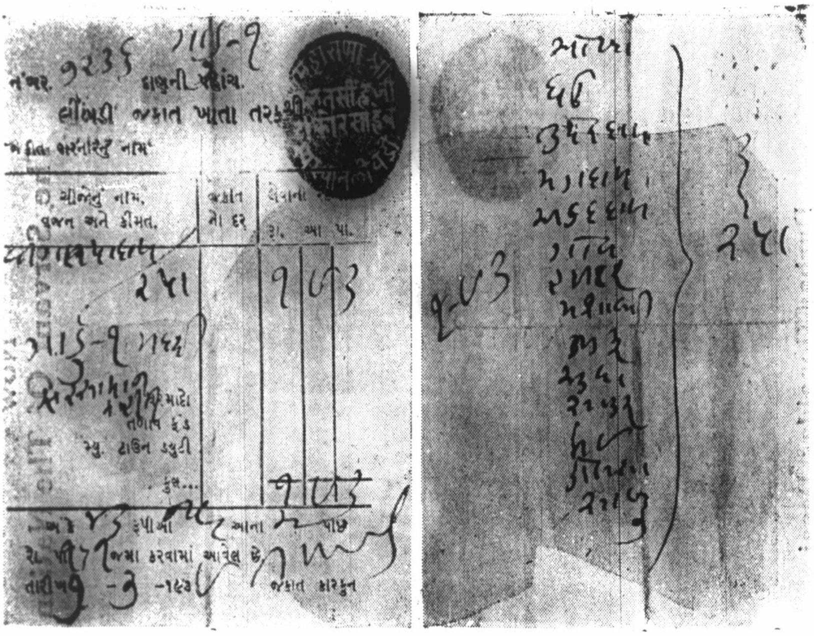
## PINCHING THE MIGRATOR—OUT OF HIS ALL.



Being afraid of migration, state im posed export duty at the rate of one anna per Rupee on the things taken with the migrators. This is the photo of an official receipt given against the export duty taken of the things. Rice, Wheat, Pulse, Mungdal, Black Gram, Jagory, Turmeric, Chillies powder, Cummin, Sugar, Ghee, Coal, Soap all total was worth 254 and so duty charged was 1-9-3.



## HOUSING THE HIJRATIS.

Huts are being constructed for city migrators.

## PUTTING THEIR HANDS FOR PROFITABLE WORK.

Training the Hijratis.

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# Once The Lord Of Land
# Now
# The Servant Of The Nation

**Darbar Gopaldas Desai**

**PRESIDENT, LIMBDI PRAJA PARISHAD**

**HE STOOD WITH THE PEOPLE THROUGH THICK AND THIN**

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# STATISTICS

## OF THEFTS, DECOITIES, FINES AND CONFISCATIONS.

What cannot be said either in words or in pictures, is given in the following pages in tne form of statistics. The summary of all these statistics is as follows:—

### FARMERS' PROPERTY CONFISCATED

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Number of migrated farmers .. .. .. | | 350 |
| Their Cattle .. .. | | 364 |
| Number of their houses confiscated .. .. | | 226 |
| Value of their houses confiscated .. | Rs. | 64,450 |
| Confiscated farms in Vighas .. .. .. | | 6958 |
| Confiscated farms in value .. .. | Rs. | 1,42,600 |
| Confiscated farm products in maunds .. .. | | 11935 |
| Confiscated farm products in value .. | Rs. | 36,040 |
| TOTAL value of their confiscated property .. .. | | 2,47,605 |
| Some 31 farmers who were suspected of taking any part in Praja Mandal activities were fined in aggregate | Rs. | 18,162 |
| TOTAL .. | | 2,65,767 |

### MERCHANTS' PROPERTY LOOTED, STOLEN OR CONFISCATED

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Number of houses confiscated .. .. .. | | 145 |
| Value of houses confiscated .. .. .. | | 61000 |
| Confiscated Farms in vighas .. .. .. | | 5290 |
| Value of farms confiscated .. .. .. | | 68450 |
| Confiscated or stolen Crop in maunds .. .. | | 5850 |
| Confiscated or stolen Crop in value .. .. | | 8325 |
| Debt due to them not allowed to be received .. | Rs. | 1,46,350 |
| Household material confiscated or stolen .. | ,, | 7,300 |
| Property or cash stolen or looted .. | ,, | 39,783 |
| Property confiscated and auctioned .. | ,, | 7,600 |
| Mercantile goods etc., .. .. | ,, | 1,550 |
| TOTAL .. | | 3,42,858 |
| Five shops in Limbdi proper were broken open and mercantile goods taken away by the State, | worth Rs. | 19,300 |
| 23 Migrators who returned to Limbdi were fined in aggregate .. .. .. | ,, | 20,917 |
| GRAND TOTAL .. | | 3,83,075 |

# CONFISCATED PROPERTY OF THE MIGRATED FARMERS

| No. | Name | Houses Confiscated | | Farms | | House hold hay for the cattle worth | New crop | | Total | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Number of Houses | Worth Rs. | Bighas | Worth Rs. | | Maunds | Worth, Rs. | | |
| | **Balol** | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Sur Jethibhai Hudabhai | 12 | 7000 | 400 | 10,000 | 25 | 2000 | 3000 | 20,025 | |
| 2 | Chauhan Rajbhai Jethibhai.. | 3 | 1500 | 225 | 4000 | 200 | 400 | 700 | 6400 | |
| 3 | Patel Daji Dhula .. | 2 | 700 | 100 | 3000 | 500 | 300 | 500 | 4800 | |
| 4 | Chahuan nagji Naran.. | 1 | 300 | 150 | 4000 | — | 300 | 500 | 4800 | |
| 5 | Sindhav Naran Sajan .. | 4 | 1000 | 156 | 4000 | 100 | 500 | 800 | 5900 | |
| 6 | Patel Mohan Goga .. | 3 | 1000 | 150 | 4000 | 100 | 600 | 1000 | 6100 | |
| 7 | Parmar Dahya Teja .. | 3 | 1000 | 135 | 3500 | — | 300 | 500 | 5000 | |
| 8 | Butia Talsi Punja .. | 3 | 1000 | 75 | 2500 | — | 200 | 400 | 3900 | |
| 9 | Khatana Ganesh Mana | 4 | 3000 | 150 | 3500 | — | 300 | 500 | 7000 | |
| 10 | Chawda Mansing Bhagwan .. | 4 | 3000 | 210 | 5000 | — | 1500 | 2500 | 10,500 | |
| 11 | Dhuda Hathi Koli .. | 5 | 1200 | 120 | 2000 | 250 | 1000 | 1700 | 5150 | |
| 12 | Talsi Punja Koli .. | 6 | 1000 | 168 | 2500 | 100 | 600 | 1000 | 4600 | |
| 13 | Lakha Sangha Koli .. | 6 | 1500 | 90 | 1800 | 50 | 500 | 600 | 8950 | |
| 14 | Gagji Haribhai Koli .. | 6 | 1200 | 75 | 1500 | 50 | 300 | 500 | 3250 | |
| 15 | Sindhav Panchan Karson | 3 | 500 | 90 | 2000 | — | 200 | 350 | 2850 | |
| 16 | Dodia Dahya Jessa .. | 2 | 900 | 150 | 3000 | — | 500 | 750 | 4650 | |
| 17 | Parmar Damoo Govind | 1 | 500 | — | — | — | 50 | 100 | 600 | |
| 18 | Parmar Teja .. | 3 | 1000 | 156 | 4000 | 100 | 600 | 1000 | 6000 | |
| 19 | Parmar Talsi Teja .. | 3 | 900 | 100 | 3000 | 100 | 400 | 600 | 4600 | |
| 20 | Parmar Thakarshi Laxman .. | 3 | 1000 | 150 | 4000 | 100 | 300 | 500 | 5600 | |
| 21 | Patel Laxman Ganesh.. | 4 | 1200 | 75 | 2000 | 50 | 600 | 1000 | 4250 | |
| 22 | Patel Kunvra Sava .. | 2 | 700 | 25 | 500 | — | 300 | 500 | 1700 | |
| 23 | Patel Gemar Ran .. | 12 | 2000 | 150 | 4000 | 125 | 300 | 500 | 6625 | |
| 24 | Patel Rama Purshotam | 2 | 500 | 90 | 3000 | 25 | 300 | 500 | 4025 | |
| 25 | Koli Popat Oghad .. | 2 | 500 | — | — | 100 | 200 | 300 | 900 | |
| 26 | Govind Naran .. | 2 | 500 | 50 | 1500 | — | 300 | 500 | 2500 | |
| | **JASHAPUR** | | | | | | | | | |
| 27 | Mathur Puna Koli .. | 7 | 1500 | 250 | 3000 | 600 | 800 | 1500 | 6600 | |
| 28 | Hari Hanu Koli .. | 4 | 1200 | 70 | 2000 | 125 | 250 | 450 | 3800 | |
| 29 | Shiva Puna Koli .. | 5 | 1000 | 70 | 2000 | 125 | 200 | 400 | 3525 | |
| 30 | Laxman Vashram Koli.. | 4 | 1000 | 70 | 2000 | 150 | 300 | 500 | 3650 | |
| 31 | Oghad Madha Koli .. | 3 | 800 | 80 | 2000 | 135 | 300 | 500 | 3435 | |
| 32 | Chhagan Anu Koli .. | 3 | 900 | 15 | 200 | 25 | 300 | 500 | 1625 | |
| 33 | Raja Ramu Solanki .. | 2 | 700 | 100 | 4000 | 50 | 300 | 500 | 5250 | |
| | **DEVPURA** | | | | | | | | | |
| 34 | Kalyan Vashram Koli .. | 4 | 500 | 35 | 400 | 50 | 150 | 300 | 1250 | |
| 35 | Ramji Jeshing Koli .. | 2 | 200 | 50 | 500 | — | — | — | 700 | |
| 36 | Nanoo Daji Koli .. | 4 | 300 | 35 | 400 | — | 100 | 150 | 850 | |
| 37 | Gala Amarshi Koli .. | 4 | 400 | 35 | 400 | 25 | 25 | 40 | 865 | |
| 38 | Moti Jivraj Koli .. | 7 | 1000 | 150 | 5000 | — | 700 | 1000 | 7000 | |
| 39 | Deva Raising Koli .. | 4 | 1000 | 100 | 3000 | 100 | 300 | 500 | 4600 | |
| 40 | Nanoo Gokal Koli .. | 4 | 500 | 48 | 500 | — | 50 | 100 | 1100 | |
| 41 | Karsan Moti Raval .. | 3 | 400 | 45 | 500 | — | 50 | 100 | 1000 | |
| 42 | Moti Lakhman Koli .. | 1 | 150 | 100 | 1000 | — | 50 | 100 | 1250 | |
| 43 | Khoda Visha Koli .. | 4 | 1000 | 60 | 1500 | 50 | 300 | 500 | 3050 | |
| 44 | Mulji Mandan Koli .. | 3 | 1500 | 75 | 2500 | 100 | 600 | 1000 | 5100 | |
| | **HADALA** | | | | | | | | | |
| 45 | Mathur Puna Koli .. | 8 | 2500 | 150 | 4000 | 200 | 500 | 800 | 7800 | |
| 46 | Bhudar Bhima Koli .. | 8 | 2400 | — | — | 125 | 300 | 500 | 3025 | |
| 47 | Mala Vaja Koli .. | 2 | 500 | 15 | 200 | 30 | 200 | 300 | 1030 | |
| 48 | Vashram Bijal Koli .. | 2 | 500 | 15 | 200 | — | 200 | 300 | 1000 | |
| 49 | Popat Kesha Koli .. | 2 | 800 | 40 | 1000 | 25 | 500 | 800 | 2625 | |
| 50 | Hamal Lavji Koli .. | 4 | 1000 | — | — | 50 | 700 | 1000 | 2050 | |

| No. | Name | Houses Confiscated | | Farms | | House hold hay for the cattl worth | New Crop | | Total | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | No. of Houses | Worth | Bighas | Worth | | Mound | Worth Rs. | | |
| 51 | Chhagan Nathu Koli .. | 5 | 1200 | 40 | 1000 | 100 | 300 | 500 | 2800 | |
| 52 | Gator Lavji Koli .. | 3 | 1000 | 35 | 1000 | 50 | 300 | 500 | 2525 | |
| 53 | Kanji Lavji Koli .. | 3 | 1000 | 35 | 1000 | 50 | 300 | 500 | 2550 | |
| 54 | Agarshing Bhagwatsing Chauhan .. | 4 | 1500 | 300 | 5000 | — | — | — | 6500 | |
| 55 | Ladhu Panchan .. | 4 | 1200 | 200 | 4000 | 200 | — | — | 4400 | |
| 56 | Mansing Keshu .. | 4 | 1200 | 200 | 4000 | 25 | — | — | 4225 | |
| 57 | Shivubha Bhagansing .. | 2 | 600 | 100 | 2000 | 25 | — | — | 2625 | |
| 58 | Mana Gobar Chauhan .. | 4 | 1500 | 200 | 4000 | 50 | — | — | 5550 | |
| | **VAKHATPUR** | | | | | | | | | |
| 59 | Jaga Ragha Koli (Hadala) .. | 2 | 700 | 200 | 4000 | — | 600 | 1000 | 500 | |
| 60 | Bhima Bhagvan | — | — | — | — | 100 | 500 | 1000 | 1100 | |
| | | 226 | 64,450 | 6958 | 1,42,600 | 4515 | 11,925 | 36,040 | 233,055 | |

**This table does not include those who did not migrate but whose property has been confiscated.**



## PROPERTY OF THE MERCHANTS LOST IN THE VILLAGES BY CONFISCATION, LOOT OR OTHERWISE.

| No. | Name | Houses | | Farms | | Harvested crop lying in MANKHAL | | Debt Due to them Rs. | Total Rs. | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | No. | Worth Rs. | Bighas | Worth Rs. | Maunds | Worth Rs. | | | |
| 1 | Ratilal Raghavji (Hadala) | 10 | 7000 | 400 | 7000 | 800 | 1000 | 10,000 | 25,000 | |
| 2 | Keshavlal Maganlal " | 12 | 8000 | 400 | 7000 | 1000 | 1300 | 25,000 | 41,300 | |
| 3 | Bhikhalal Nemchand " | 20 | 8000 | 500 | 12,000 | 1200 | 1600 | 25,000 | 46,600 | |
| 4 | Maneckchand Nemchand (Hadala) | 12 | 5000 | 50 | 500 | 100 | 125 | 5000 | 10,625 | |
| 5 | Bhikhalal Ujamshi " | 12 | 3000 | 125 | 1300 | 150 | 200 | 6000 | 10,500 | |
| 6 | Hemchand Tribhowan " | 2 | 1200 | — | — | — | — | 800 | 2000 | |
| 7 | Shantilal Laxmichand " | 2 | 1000 | — | — | — | — | 400 | 1000 | |
| 8 | Hargovindas Zunjabhai | — | — | — | — | — | — | 400 ‡ | 1000 | ‡ Rs. 600/- worth of sale able goods in the shop. |
| 9 | Girdharlal Mohanlal .. | — | — | — | — | — | — | 250 † | 500 | † Rs. 250/- worth of sale able goods in the shop. |
| 10 | Mochi Mohan Gokul .. | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 200 | =Sale able goods in the shop. |
| 11 | Pinjara Hajibhai Usman | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 50 | =Household goods. |
| 12 | Nathu Dhana Barber .. | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 50 | |

| No. | Name | Houses Number | Houses Worth Rs. | Farms Bighas | Farms Worth Rs. | New reaped corp that was lying on MANKHAL Maunds | New reaped corp Worth Rs. | Debt Due to them Rs. | Total Rs. | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | Bhailal Ujamshi .. | 1 | 500 | — | — | — | — | — | 1000 | =Rs. 100\|- worth of sale able goods in shop & Rs. 400\|- worth of house hold goods. |
| 14 | Seth Hemchand Shivlal Balol .. | 10 | 5000 | 300 | 2500 | 500 | 800 | 20,000 | 29,823 | Rs. 1000\|- worth of house hold goods in the house & Rs. 523\|- worth of theft. |
| 15 | Seth Manilal Shivlal .. | 10 | 3000 | 300 | 2500 | 400 | 700 | 1000 | 7700 | Rs. 500\|- worth of household goods. |
| 16 | Seth Popatlal Chhaganlal .. | 2 | 600 | — | — | — | — | 3400 | 4000 | |
| 17 | Seth Panachand Trikamlal .. | 10 | 3000 | 100 | 1000 | 150 | 300 | 2000 | 7382 | 1082\|-. |
| 18 | Thobhan Kapoor (Devpura) | 20 | 5000 | 500 | 10,000 | 1500 | 2000 | 10,000 | 27,000 | Rs. 200\|- worth of household goods. |
| 19 | Jethalal Mathur ,, | 1 | 200 | 150 | 1500 | 150 | 300 | 9000 | 11,200 | |
| 20 | Kalubhai Dhanji (Pansana) | 5 | 1500 | 150 | 2500 | – | – | 8000 | 12,000‡ + 1200 | ‡ Pertaining to Pansana Dacoity. |
| 21 | Chhotalal Punjabhai „ | 4 | 5000 | 50 | | | | | 2000‡ + 5000 | & No. 20 & 22 are looted twice. |
| 22 | Nathalal Purshotam „ | — | — | — | — | — | | | 500 + 6000‡ 3000‡ | |
| 23 | Sukhlal Jashraj „ | — | — | — | — | | | — | 1000‡ | |
| 24 | Nagardas Chhaganlal „ | — | | — | — | | | — | 2000‡ | |
| 25 | Chunilal Punjabhai „ | — | — | — | — | | | — | 1000‡ | |
| 26 | Keshavlal Chhaganlal „ | — | — | — | | | | | | |
| 27 | Vallabhbhai Chhaganlal (Pansana) | — | — | — | — | | | — | 700‡ 100‡ | |
| 28 | Bhurabhai Chunilal „ | — | — | — | — | | | — | 100‡ | |
| 29 | other three „ | — | — | — | — | | | — | 400‡ | Theft. |
| 30 | Soni Nagardas Kalidas.. | — | — | — | — | | | | 500‡ | Theft. |
| 31 | Shah Chhabildas .. | — | — | — | — | | | | 5000‡ | Theft. |
| 32 | Shah Trambaklal .. | — | — | — | — | | | | | |
| 33 | Soni Kanji Dayabhai .. | — | — | — | — | | | | | |
| 34 | Maganlal Nimji (Ranagadh) .. | 12 | — 4000 | — | — | | | | 30,000 | Rs. 5500\|- house-hold goods and cattle. |
| 35 | Ujamshi Jethabhai (Shiani) .. | — | — | | | | | | 250 2000 | |
| 36 | Bhuralal Oghad „ | — | — | | | | | | 1000 | |
| 37 | Shivlal Gulabchand | House sealed by the state & household materials auctioned | | | | | | | 5000 | Theft. |
| 38 | Chunilal Gulabchand | Do— | | — | Do | — | — | | 500 | Theft. |
| 39 | Lallubhai Kishanlal (Jamboo) | House sealed—Peoples debt to him not allowed to be repaid | | | | | | | 150 | Theft. |
| 40 | Shah Amulakh „ | | | | | | | | | |
| 41 | Premchand Bhurabhai Tokrala .. | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | | |
| 42 | Jagjiwan Pragji Pansina | — | — | 300 | 3000× | — | — | — | 3000 | |
| 43 | Jatabhai Chatur Pansina | — | — | 400 | 4000 | — | — | — | 4000 | |
| 44 | Umedchand Gafalbhai Pansina .. | — | — | 75 | 750 | — | — | — | 750 | |

| No. | Name | Houses | | Farms | | New reaped corp that was lying in MANKHAL | | Debt.-Due to them Rs. | Total | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Number | Worth Rs, | Bighas | Worth Rs. | Maunds | Worth Rs. | | Bs. | |
| 45 | Bhura Kalidas | | | | | | | | | |
| 46 | Sukhlal Jasraj " | — | — | 60 | 600 | — | — | — | 600 | |
| 47 | Raghubhai Lavji Pansana .. | — | — | 60 | 600 | — | — | — | 600 | |
| 48 | Maganbhai Lavji " | — | — | 125 | 1250 | — | — | — | 1250 | ‡ The State has forbidden people from paying this debt. |
| 49 | Shantilal Mohan " | — | — | 200 | 2000 | — | — | — | 2000 | |
| 50 | Maganlal Rachandra Raval Mojidad .. | — | — | 40 | 400 | — | — | — | 400 | |
| 51 | Khimchand Lalchand .. | — | — | 130 | 1300 | — | — | — | 1300 | |
| 52 | Mohanlal Pragji .. | — | — | 150 | 1500 | — | — | — | 1500 | |
| 53 | Maganlal Jasraj Manekchand .. | — | — | 150 | 1500 | — | — | — | 1500 | |
| 54 | Thakarshi Kashalchand | — | — | 275 | 2750 | — | — | — | 2750 | |
| 55 | Bhaichand Chhaganlal | — | — | 50 | 500 | — | — | — | 500 | |
| 56 | Nyalchand Dayhabhai | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 5000A | A All this loss is due to theft. |
| 57 | Chimanlal Tulsidas .. | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 500A | |
| 58 | Raychand Himchand .. | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 800A | |
| 59 | Jivraj Bhaichand *Kattechi* .. | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 2128A | |
| 60 | Maganlal Bhikhabhai *Bodia* .. | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 500B | B Property confiscated and auctioned by the State. |
| 61 | Manekchand Sunderji .. | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 300B | |
| 62 | Sukhlal Ujamshi .. | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 800B | |
| | | 145 | 61,000 | 5290 | 68,450 | 5950 | 8325 | 1,46,350 | 3,42,858 | |

‡ The State has forbidden people from paying this debt.

The figures given in all these tables are naturally approximate, though it may be added that every effort has been made to collect all necessary information and to verify the same.

# WHAT THE LEADERS SAY

## No safety of person or Property

### SARDAR PATEL'S STATEMENT

*The statement issued by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on 8th Feb. 1939.*

"Shocking news has been received from Limbdi State in Kathiawar which I have no reason to disbelieve as it has been sent by reliable workers of the *Prajamandal* who were sent by me after proper investigation.

Soon after the Rajkot settlement which had been disliked by the Resident and has subsequently been broken, all the Kathiawar Princes met at the Rajkot Residency at the invitation of the Resident, and they seem to have decided upon a common policy of suppressing the *Prajamandals* in their respective States. Repressive measures of different forms have been taken in several States from that time.

Minorities such as the Musalmans, Garasias, Bhayats etc., have been set up against the *Prajamandals* and they have been incited to obstruct and break the popular movement for the demand of responsible government.

With the breach of the solemn agreement by the Rajkot Thakore at the investigation of the Resident, a regular reign of terror and frightfulness has commenced. But Limbdi has improved upon the Rajkot methods of barbarism and brutality. Eighty people armed with guns, swords, dharias, knives, etc. fell upon the *Prajamandal* workers in several villages, brutally assaulted some people, fired at some houses, looted property worth thousands of rupees, and carried it away in several motor cars which they had brought with them.

Some of these raiders were identified as State servants and their having such a fleet of motor cars at their disposal is also suggestive of the source from which they got the aid.

If the reports are true, there is no safety of person or property in Limbdi State. No steps have so far been taken nor has the Thakore Saheb bestirred himself in the matter.

About three thousand State subjects have gone on hungerstrike as a protest against the attitute of the Thakore Saheb in front of the palace since 48 hours. Telegrams have been sent to the Viceroy and to Mahatma Gandhi by the people.

Even if these facts are partially believed there is no doubt that an organised attempt is being made to crush the *Praja-mandal* by imposing upon them the methods adopted elsewhere. I wonder if the British Resident, who is so anxious to protect these autocratic relics of barbaric age feels any responsibility to protect these innocent unarmed people. Is this not what Gandhiji calls "organised goondaism?" Is it expected that the Congress Government in the neighbouring Province should only be unconcerned spectators?"

# LIMBDI

**BY MAHATMA GANDHI**

*Article by Mahatma Gandhi published in the "Harijan" dated 25th February, 1939.*

LIMBDI is a Kathiawar State. It had the reputation of being progressive. I have the good fortune to know many of its workers. They are wise, self-sacrificing and capable of doing hard work. In common with many States Limbdi also had a great awakening among the people. The workers used to boast of their progressive *Yuvaraj*. But they have now discovered that he has imbibed some curious notions of the dictatorships of the West. He would let the reformers have a free run of little Limbdi. But they must not go to the villages. In the villages he was to make his own experiments unhindered by anybody. The Limbdi reformers thought that they had as much right as the *Yuvaraj* to work among the villagers especially as they had already established connection with them. They therefore dared to go to the villages with the result mentioned in the following telegram :

> "At least eighty persons, armed with lathis, dharias, native guns, swords, axes, attacked village Pansina midnight fifth. Entrances of village were guarded by batches of three to five persons. Two batches of twenty persons went round village and selected houses of *Prajamandal* workers and sympathisers for dacoity. First of all they went to *Prajamandal* office and chained it from outside so that volunteers cannot go out. Then one batch went to house of Chhotalal, prominent merchant and *Prajamandal* worker, and brutally assaulted him and his wife. She received serious injuries including on her sex organs. President of local branch attacked with sword and received punctured wound in lungs. About thirty persons are seriously injured. Ornaments cash and goods worth about sixty thousand rupees taken away from ten to twelve houses of active members of *Prajamandal*. Dacoits continuously carried on firing in air and at houses for about two hours. After this they went to another village, Ralol, two miles away from Pansina and repeated process there. Three goldsmiths and one bania sympathising with popular movement have been seriously wounded and property worth ten thousand rupees taken away. One bania Jeychand Valji attacked to-day with knife, stabbed at four places and plundered in Siani; his sister also beaten. People have strong grounds to suspect State officers' hand in dacoity. Some dacoits were identified as pagis and pasayatas of State. *Prajamandal* workers and sympathisers were actually being threatened since last week by State pagi pasayatas that they will be robbed and beaten. Stolen property removed in about eight motor cars and two buses which could not have been supplied by private individuals. Dacoits continued firing in air for two hours using

number of cartridges which could not have been supplied by private individual. State police has not started any investigation as yet. Even panchnamas have not been made. No medical aid sent by State from capital. Thakoresaheb even though approached has not taken any strong action. Threats of similar dacoity are being given by State pasayatas in other villages. Previous incidents of *goondaism* strengthen this suspicion. Attacking Bhaktiba's car with lathis in Jambu by mukhi's men, smashing *Prajamandal* car and beating its driver and worker in Siani, beating members of *Prajamandal* in village Raska, threatening head of volunteers in Siani by village pasayata with death, free movement of about thirty *goondas* with lathis, dharias, knives in Siani and number of such incidents have left no doubt here that organized *goondaism* is satrted by State to suppress recently started popular movement. Attention of Thakoresaheb has been drawn to these incidents times without number but in vain. As protest against last act of dacoity about 400 to 500 persons including Nagarsheth Lalchandbhai and prominent citizens like Durlabhji Umedchand, Amulakh Amichand have started hunger strike and are sitting day and night before Palace. About three thousand other persons have joined this morning. Great indignation prevails against State. People observing remarkably non-violent attitude and are prepared for any contingency."

They also dared to announce a meeting of their *Parisad* with the result embodied in the following message received by me :

"Sitting *Praja Parishad* arranged to-morrow. To break *Praja Parishad* many *goondas* imported Limbdi. People suspect hand of State officials in this. Strong grounds for this suspicion. Procession of *goondas* armed with lathis, naked swords, guns, dharias, marching thorugh town for whole day. Some of these tried to assault certain women. Seth Amulakh Amichand, prominent merchant of Bombay, intervened and asked them to beat him rather than women. Seth Durlabhji Umedchand and Bhagwanlal Harakhchand rushed to scene with six male volunteers. Male volunteers were brutally assaulted with sticks and beaten. At another place *goondas* caught hold of Prahladrai Mody, pleader of Bhavnagar, and released him only when they knew that he was not *Prajamandal* worker. Bhogilal Gandhi was threatened with death by *goonda* armed with naked sword. Manubhai Thakar was given one lathi blow. *Goondas* are shouting before *Prajamandal* office. Batch of *goondas* headed by Tapubha of Siani who is State servant and who beat *Prajamandal* volunteers in Siani two days before have stationed themselves outside Sthanakvasi Bhojanshala where peasants from villages are sleeping. They threaten anybody who comes out with death. Different batches of *goondas* are marching streets. Practically state of siege amounting to virtual martial law by State prevails. People feel that State is

responsible for this. Narubha superintendent of police was seen talking with some of these by respectable people. Many peasants are forcibly brought from villages and made to parade streets in processions headed by these *goondas*. People have adopted remarkably non-violent attitude and have decided to suffer anything for asserting their right to meet in *Parishad*."

I have since learnt that Durbar Gopaldas Desai and his wife Bhaktiba were surrounded by the same gentlemen described in the message. Both suffered minor injuries. The *goondas* had the satisfaction for a time of preventing the meeting of the *Parishad*.

I have no reason whatsoever for disbelieving the messages which describe the events with a wealth of detail that carries conviction. What is more, they are sent by parties whom I hold to be incapable of conscious exaggeration or of invention.

In spite of this lawlessness, the reformers will win if they have grit enough to be ground to the dust and if they really represent the wishes of the people. The public outside will help them. The Paramount Power is also bound by treaty obligations to help them as has been amply proved by Pyarelal in the extracts produced from Lee Warner. But let the Satyagrahis know that salvation comes from within. They will have to lose all, if they will save their souls and gain the freedom which is their birthright.

*Segaon, 20-2-39.*

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# NEW LIMBDI TECHNIQUE

## PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU'S MESSAGE

*Message from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru for Limbdi meeting held on 22nd June, 1939.*

**"Of the many extraordinary and deplorable events that have happened in the Indian States in recent months, the occurances in Limbdi State are in many ways the most significant. We are unfortunately used to oppression of all kinds in the States; to firing on crowds or individuals, to a medieval and often an incompetent administration. Even our protests grow dull on repetition. Yet the suffering of the people does not grow less because it continues.**

**Limbdi has become symbolic of a new technique on the part of some of the Rulers. It is a technique which is spreading in Kathiawar and elsewhere. This is a technique of the State encouraging gangsterism, dacoity and brutal violence by private individuals or the hirelings, on the people who are engaged in the States' People's struggle. This behaviour is bad enough at any time or anywhere. Where it occurs, it is a sure sign of the utter incompetence and bankruptcy of the State authorities. Where a State cannot stop this, it has ceased to function, and has lost all claim to the co-operation and allegiance of its people.**

**But what shall we say to the State which itself encourages this disgusting brutality and goondaism? What shall we say of Limbdi which has exhibited this?**

**We have much to say and words are feeble vehicles for our thoughts but we shall say it in other and more effective ways when the time comes. Let no man imagine that violence and gangsterism will suppress a people's movement.**

**I send my greetings to the people of Limbdi, and I want to assure them and all the peoples of the States that in spite of present sorrow and distress, the future is theirs, and for that future we have to work and will work with all determination and confidence."**

*June 22, 1939.* **JAWAHARLAL NEHRU.**

# CONFERENCE ATROCITIES

## JOINT STATEMENT OF M.L.AS. WHO WERE PRESENT ON THE SPOT

Mrs. Leelavati Munshi, M.L.A., Mrs. Leelavati Desai, President Jyoti Sangh, Ahmedabad, Sjt. Jivanlal Diwan, Secretary, Gujrat Provincial Congress Committee, Sjt. Arjun Lala, Secretary, Ahmedabad District Congress Committee, Sjt. Shantilal Shah, Solicitor, M.L.C. and Sjt. Kalidas Jaskaran Jhaveri, Municipal Councillor, Ahmedabad have issued the following statement:—

We went to Limbdi on 19th February to attend the Praja Parishad which was announced to be held there that day under the Presidentship of Darbar Shri Gopaldas.

On arrival at Wadhwan Junction at 11 A.M., we learnt that there was rowdyism at Limbdi since the previous evening and that Darbar Shri Gopaldas was prevented by an unruly crowd from entering the town.

On arrival at the station at 12-30 noon, we learnt that rowdyism had broken out afresh that morning and a large number of persons who had come to attend the Parishad were wounded. The leaders of the Praja Mandal and the local workers were engaged in attending to the wounded and though they were determined to hold the Parishad, they were not sure whether it be possible to hold the Parishad as they were very busy attending the wounded and the situation was very tense.

We were told that the State had issued that morning a notification banning the carrying of lathis and other weapons.

On entering the town, we saw groups of persons collected at various places. A few had black flags and some were armed with lathies. Every one of them had a green or red piece of cloth on his person.

We saw a crowd of about 200 persons collected at the doors of the place where Darbar Gopaldas had put up. Almost all of them carried lathies and had either green or red piece of cloth on his person. We were informed that Darbar Shri was virtually made a prisoner since morning. We did not see any police.

It was a surprise to us that any person could thus be imprisoned by an unruly mob and the State Authority should be incapable of taking any action in the matter.

On reaching our Utara, we were told that a large number of villagers who had come to attend the Parishad had been wounded and so we went to the Civil Hospital and to the Camps of the Parishad to see the wounded. We observed that all shops in the Town were closed, that the residents were keeping in-doors and peeped at us while we were passing. Groups of persons with red and green pattis were moving about on the roads and in gullies.

On our way to the Hospital, we saw about 200 persons with red and green pattis lodged in the State Utara. They appeared to have specially come down to take part in the rowdyism and seemed to be enjoying State hospitality.

The sight at the Hospital was very tragic. There was a stream of wounded being brought by Praja Mandal workers. The wounded were being removed to the Praja Mandal Camps. After their wounds were dressed, those who were more seriously injured were detailed. Amongst the wounded, we saw a student who had been belaboured all over the body. The others had wounds on various parts of the body, such as the head, the forehead, the nose, the arms, the chest and legs. Clothes of several persons were blood-stained. Two or three of them were in a very serious condition. A young man had his leg broken and in splinters. In a bus which was carrying about a dozen wounded, we saw a young boy of about 14 with a bleeding wound under the eye.

While we were at the Hospital, a group of about 25 to 30 men wearing red or green pattis came there, led by a man wearing green safa, who, we were told, was the Village Headman (Mukhi) of Jambu. He began reading names from a list he had with him. A Hospital servant filled up case forms as the Mukhi called out names, and one by one the persons who had accompanied him came forward and took the form. We did not see marks of any injury on any of them.. Mrs. Munshi enquired what the injuries were and she was curtly told that it was for the Doctor to see.

We then went to Panjarapole, Puribai Dharmashala and Jain Bhojanshala. There too, we saw many wounded, some of them being very young boys. The village women-folk at all these places were very anxious about their men-folk and Mrs. Munshi consoled them.

At the Bhojanshala, a very large number of villagers had assembled. The Praja Mandal was determined to hold the Parishad. It was 2-30 P.M., the time announced for the Parishad. As the place fixed for the Parishad was raided and in charge of the Police and the Mandap was destroyed, the local workers decided to hold the Parishad there and then. Accordingly the Parishad was held under the Presidentship of Mrs. Munshi as it was impossible for Darbar Shri Gopaldas to come out.

Two resolutions were passed, one declaring the determination of the people to attain responsible government and, the other condemning the attrocities and anarchy in the village and the City, and demanding an independent inquiry by an impartial tribunal.

After the Parishad was over, we went to the place where Darbar Shri Gopaldas was besieged. A crowd wearing red and green pattis and carrying lathis had stationed itself at all entrances, and was in a violent mood. After two of us, Mrs. Munshi and Mrs. Desai, had entered, the others were prevented from entering. The crowd was crying "Bandh Karo." With great difficulty, we could persuade them to allow us to en-

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ter the house. Shri Atmaram Bhat who was with us had his shirt torn off, the white caps of three of us were snatched away, and two of us were left behind. One of them, Sjt. Kantilal Ruwala, from Ahmedabad, received an iron-shod lathi blow on his head and bled, and he had to be dressed. Mr. Shantilal Shah was jostled, but was ultimately allowed to go in, on the ringleader being assured that Mr. Shantilal had come from Bombay. On coming out of the house, one man asked the crowd to keep away and make room for us to go and this was done.

During our rounds from 1 to 4 P. M. we hardly saw any Police and the few that were there made no attempt to control the mob or to disarm them.

In the evening at about 5 P.M., we went to the Jain Boarding where we saw many more wounded.

By this time, the crowd of the red and green patti rowdies had dispersed, but some of them were sitting on the verandahs and footpaths on the main road and near the statue of the late Ruler. Armed Police were then seen posted at various places on the main road. All these rowdies were in a holiday mood and none of them appeared to be apprehensive of the consequences of what they had done. They were freely talking with the Police in a friendly spirit.

Some time before we went to the Jain Boarding, a motor car carrying Mrs. Vijaya Ben Parikh and Mr. Bapalal Doshi had been attacked and smashed, and we went there and saw glass pieces on the road.

According to information available to us, about 600 persons had been wounded, two or three of them being in a serious condition. All these were persons who had come to attend the Parishad. So far as we could see, none of the Police nor any person wearing green or red patti was injured. None except those wearing green and red pattis carried any lathi or any other weapon. In spite of such violent attacks, the people observed exemplarary non-violence. The leaders of the Praja Mandal were moving about the whole day attending to the wounded and giving courage at great personal risk to themselves. The villagers were undaunted and prepared to stand by the Parishad.

The Town was in a state of anarchy and left to the mercy of the red and green patti persons. Some of the wounded informed us that they had recognised some of those who had belaboured them, to be State Servants and Policemen.

Persons who were principally assaulted were the villagers who had come to attend the Parshad. This was done obviously with a view to terrorise them. They were attacked at their camps and at the place where the Parishad was to be held. These were all close private places. The rowdies climbed the walls, opened the gate for more of them to enter and severely belaboured those within.

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Some of the State Servants and motor buses had red and green pattis. The Town was left in full control of a few hundred persons who were determined to wreck the Parishad at any cost. They appeared to be acting under the directions of a few ringleaders. The complete inactivity on the part of the State Authorities was amazing. The situation was extremely grave, but the State appeared to have no anxiety about it and made no attempt to control or ease the situation. The people did not feel any safety about their person or property.

We have confined ourselves, only to such facts as were seen by us personally or came to our knowledge as a result of inquiries made by us during our stay of 9 hours in the Town. We had no time to make detailed enquiries or to take any statement of the injured.

# EXHIBITION OF ORGANISED GOONDAISM

## A. I. N. S. P. CONFERENCE'S STATEMENT

*Extract from the statement issued by Standing Committee of the All India States' People's Conference on 28th June, 1939.*

"In Kathiawar a new technique was developed by the authorities to meet the peoples' movement. *In the small State of Limbdi there was repeatedly the most astonishing and distressing exhibition of organised gangsterism for which the State must be held responsible.* ............ ........... arson and decoity and physical violence were indulged in apparently by gangs of hooligans, in order to terrorise people and more especially the leaders and workers of the Prajamandals. *Six thousand of a total population of forty thousand of Limbdi migrated from the State. Of these five thousand came from Limbdi town which normally has a population of thirteen thousand. The great majority of them are still refugees and their property in the villages have been confiscated and sold by the State for the sole offence of migration. Businessmen of Limbdi town who have migrated cannot take possession of the goods in their shops.*

*A State which encourages this or even tolerates it supinely is a State which has sunk to the lowest level, which has lost even the claim to be called a State. Yet this was done and is being done, while thousands of unhappy sufferers became refugees and fled from the territories of the State.* This was done while the Paramount Power looked on and by its acquiescense gave the Rulers and the people to understand that it was a consenting party to the misdeeds. Is it unnatural that under the circumstances the Paramount Power should be considered an accessary to the crimes committed in the States?"

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# LAWLESS LIMBDI

BY MAHATMA GANDHI

*Article by Mahatma Gandhi published in the "Harijan" dated 9th September, 1939 under the caption of "Lawless Limbdi".*

THOUGH I have had protracted correspondence with the Limbdi people, I have refrained for a long time from saying anything about their woes. My silence was due to the hope that those who were trying to bring about peace between the Ruler and the people would succeed. But it was a vain hope. Much has happened since the beginning stages of that struggle. Perhaps nowhere has the policy of ruthlessness been pursued with so much precision and persistence as in Limbdi. If the reports received by me are to be believed, and I have no reason to disbelieve them, the peasants have been hunted out of their homes. The heaviest blow has been aimed at the hated Bania who was at one time the State's friend, favourite and main supporter. But he was to be crushed because he dared to think and talk of responsible government, dared to go amongst the peasantry and tell them what was due to them and how they could get it. The shops and houses of these merchants who have performed *hijrat* are practically looted. I cannot use any other term. There has not even been, so far as I know, any legal formality observed. The will of the administrator of the policy of ruthlessness is the supreme law. The idea is to terrorize the people into subjection. No wonder some have weakened. I would advise those who are in charge of the movement not to try to keep them from surrendering. Of course they should be told what is in store for them. But there are people who prize possessions before honour. They can only be a burden on a freedom movement. Freedom is always won by a few brave self-sacrificing souls who will stake everything for the sake of honour. Those who understand the value and the necessity of sacrifice, whether they are few or many, should feel glad that their possessions in Limbdi have been taken away. They should not live in suspense nor entertain any hope of immediate settlement. They should engage in healthy pursuits outside the State, always in the firm faith that a day must come when the people of Limbdi will come into their own. When that day comes, as it must, it will have come because of the sacrifice and the bravery of those who will have refused to bend before repression, however severe. Let them remember Thoreau's immortal words that possession is a vice, poverty a virtue in a tyrannical State.

So much on reliable evidence before me. But should Limbdi be a tyrannical State? If there is exaggeration in the statements made to me, let the State authorities send me a contradiction. I would gladly publish it. Better still will be an impartial judicial inquiry into the allegations made, if they are disputed. I wish to make a public appeal

to the Thakore Saheb of Limbdi. I have the privilege of knowing him. I have enjoyed his hospitality. He has the reputation of being a pious God-fearing man. It is not right that there should be this estrangement between him and his people, some of whom are well-known people with a reputation to lose and a stake in Limbdi. It would be wrong to regard them all as a discontented lot. They have no axes to grind. They have no earthly gain to make by ranging themselves against the State. They have incurred much material loss by becoming exiles from their own home. A wise ruler will think fifty times before facing the discontent of such people. He will conclude from it that there must be misrule and injustice on the part of his officials. He will summon the discontented people, listen to their complaints and pacify them. The Thakore Saheb has not adopted that course. It is not too late for him

*Segaon, 31-8-39.*

to do so even now.

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# LOOTE IN LIMBDI

## A. I. S. P. C.'S STATEMENT

*The following is the extract from a staetment issued by the Standing Committee of The All India States' People's Conference dated 11-10-39.*

In Limbdi properties worth thousands of rupees is taken away from shops of Hijaratees without any pretence of law. Heavy fines are being levied on the Praja Mandal workers who desire to return home. A reactionary reform scheme dividing the State into communities and interests and separating capital from villages is being worked in defiance of wishes of the people. Altogether a reign of terror exists in the State of Limbdi.

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# SEARCHLIGHT ON LIMBDI

**SHANTILAL SHAH M.L.C., SOLICITOR**

*Article by Mr. Shantilal H. Shah M.L.C., Solicitor published in "The Congress Socialist" dated 26-2-'39.*

LIMBDI, at present appears ot have overshadowed the movements in other Indian States of Kathiawar. There is a very good ground for this. In order to crush the *Praja Mandal* and the freedom movement the Limbdi State has adopted methods unique in frightfulness and unprecedented in atrociousness.

Limbdi is a small state in Kathiawar, having a territory of about 250 sq. miles and a population of about 40,000. It has only one town *viz.* Limbdi and about 40 villages. Its annual income is about Rs. 8,00,000 of which more than 90% is derived from the villages, principally land revenue. About 50% of this income is swallowed up in the expenses of the Royal family only.

The movement in Limbdi is very recent. While the Rajkot struggle was going on, in December, last, prominent citizens of Limbdi residing in Bombay, met the *Yuvaraj* and expressed their desire to educate the people to take part in the administration. The *Yuvaraj* stated that he welcomed such efforts and that he would render assistance and give his cars to go to the villages. During Christmas the people at Limbdi took steps to establish the *Praja Mandal*. At the invitation of the *Yuvaraj*, the leaders met him and they were surprised at a complete change of front on his part. The *Yuvaraj* himself had devised a scheme the essence of which was to divide the city from the villages and one community from another. He was adamant that the *Praja Mandal* workers should under no circumstances go to the village. He professed concern for the villagers and wanted dictatorial powers to work his scheme. Further discussion therefore was useless and the *Praja Mandal* was established.

The *Yuvaraj* and his younger brother who is the *Diwan* pretended that they did not desire to restrict the civil liberties of the people. The State did not put a legal ban on *Praja Mandal* or its activities, Instead it resorted to organised *goondaism* to suppress the movement. Here again its methods were novel.

The State encouraged its officers to start a rival organisation which was called *Sanatan Mandal.* Almost all office-bearers of the *Mandal* are State officers or State dependants. The State rendered this *Mandal* all assistance to oppose the activities of the *Praja Mandal* by openly violent methods.

*In the villages the State employed hirelings to frighten the people from joining the Praja Mandal. These Satte hirelings assisted by State officers openly intimidated, abused and assaulted all those who worked for, became members of or sympathised with the Praja Mandal. It is so*

*easy in small villages to harass and persecute the villagers in many ways. These hirelings were freely let loose to intimidate the villagers.*

These methods of frightfulness, however, failed to repress the people. The State, therefore, went a step further. About 80 persons fully armed with guns, swords, *dharias*, etc. committed dacoities at midnight in two of the villages, attacked, seriously injured and robbed the *Praja Mandal* workers. The evidence leaves no doubt that the dacoities were a part of the conspiracy of the State to crush the movement. Other villages were openly threatened with dacoities and well-known dacoits freely moved in the villages carrying arms, intimidating and threatening. Thefts and dacoities in the villages for all *Praja Mandal* workers and sympathisers became common.

The people and the *Praja Mandal* workers were however undaunted. They determined to hold the *Praja Parishad* on 19th February under the Presidentship of Darbar Gopaldas. Along with these methods of frightfulness the State also tried the policy of divide and rule. These methods also failed.

*The State therefore organised all its forces to break the Parisad at any cost. It had not the courage to give a straight fight. It collected its hirelings and goondas under the banner of Sanatan Mandal. The Diwan had the audacity to issue a communique three or four days before the Parisad stating that State will not be responsible for any untoward consequences if the Parisad were held. He thus gave a license to the State hirelings and goondas to commit breach of peace. The so called Sanatan Mandal collected about 700 to 800 persons amongst whom were many petty State servants and dependants of the State. The higher officials of the State openly organised and directed the activities of this crowd. All these rowdies were collected in Limbdi city on the 18th. They were armed with lathis. It was obvious that serious trouble was ahead, but the State took no steps to control the situation.*

On the evening of the 18th February inspite of all efforts of the State to prevent the villagers from coming to the city to attend the *Parisad*, thousands flocked to Limbdi and put up at the camps of the *Praja Mandal*. The rowdies were freely moving in the city carrying weapons. Many of these persons had put up at State's *uttaras* and enjoyed State's hospitality. In the evening of the 18th the procession organised by *Praja Mandal* was attacked by these rowdies and a few persons were injured. All night the situation was very grave. The President-elect reached Limbdi at 2 O'clock at night and was violently prevented by the rowdies from entering the city until 7 a. m. Since morning the rowdies besieged the residence of the president and prevented him from moving out. The whole night, the camps of the *Parisad* were surrounded by these persons who abused and assaulted the villagers who had come to attend the *Parisad*.

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*In the morning the State issued an order prohibiting carrying of arms. That was only a show. These hirelings openly carried arms and no effort was made to disarm them or to round them up. The Parisad was to take place at 2 p. m. At about 11 a. m. all the camps of the Parisad and place where it was to take place were simutaneously attacked. The goondas climbed over the wall and furiously attacked persons within who were prevented from going out. More than 600 persons were injured, some of them very seriously. Jalianwalla was repeated. The Parisad mandap was smashed and a reign of terror prevailed. The stream of wounded at hospitals was endless. The workers of the Parisad at the risk of their lives attended to the wounded. The writer was an eye-witness to these scenes.*

The State had abdicated in favour of the *goondas*. The police had almost disappeared. The ruler and other higher officials kept behind the screens. Not a single arrest was made. There was complete anarchy and no safety of person or property.

The State wanted to create an appearence as if it was a fight between two sections of the people, one for and one against the *Parisad*. But the conspiracy was completely exposed. An attempt was made to fabricate evidence of hospital records to show that some of the so-called *Sanatanis* were also injured. Several respectable persons were witness to the fact that these records were false.

In spite of these atrocities the *Parisad* was held in another place at the appointed time under the President-ship of Mrs. Lilavati Munshi, M.L.A. as the president-elect was prevented from moving out.

There is no safety left of persons or property in Limbdi State. Thousands have left the State and many more are preparing to leave. The leaders of the movement, who are leading and respectable citizens of Limbdi, each of them owning properties worth thousands, are determined to carry on the struggle. One cannot but admire the exemplary non-violence of the people under such extremely provoking circumstances.

The atrocities of Limbdi cry for a thorough impartial investigation. Under any other circumstances the Limbdi ruler would have been deposed long ago, but one does not expect the Paramount Power at present to do its duty by the people of Limbdi! The people must stand on their own strength and that of the Congress which is the real Paramount Power of the people.

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# NO INQUIRY

*[Shri Mahadeo Desai writes in "Harijan" dated 25th November 1939 under the Captain "No inquiry!" This article is in continuation of Mahatma Gandhi's article in "Harijan" dated 9-9-1939 under the Captain "Lawless Limbdi". For this article see page 94 of this book.]*

About two months ago Gandhiji wrote in these columns on the policy of ruthlessness pursued in the Limbdi State (Kathiawad), the persecution of the Banias, looting of their houses and shops, and appealed to the Thakore Saheb of Limbdi to appoint an impartial inquiry into the allegations and to pacify the discontented people. The Thakore Saheb, who knows Gandhiji very well did not condescened to make any response, but Gandhiji received a letter signed by some of the loyalists in the State denying the allegations and asserting that the agitation for responsible government was a trumpery one set up by "certain Banias who wanted to monopolise power and to pollute our religion"—the loyalist signatories being all Sanatanist* Hindus—"and who, when they found that the people were not with them, resorted to *hijrat* and boycott and tried to coerce us and the State into submission and promoted feelings of revenge against us. They have thus to makeup not with the State but with us." On this I wrote to them saying that they should not expect Gandhiji to take in all that they had said, and suggesting either of the two courses: (1) They or the State should be prepared to welcome Gandhiji or his representative to Limbdi and to satisfy him of the truth of their statements; or (2) The State should appoint an independent and impartial inquiry into the allegations of terrorism made by the leaders of the popular agitation. To this I have received the following reply:

"Every one of the people here believes that all that we have written to you is true, and we therefore see no reason for an inquiry. There is such harmony between the people and the State that there is already a scheme of reforms being framed in accordance with the aspirations of the people, some popular institutions have been already established, and in the circumstances no one here desires that any outsider should interfere in our affairs, and we therefore would not like to trouble Gandhiji or his representative to come here. The people have already been given the power, to a large extent, to redress the grievances of *hijratis* and others. They should, therefore, apply to the Shaher Sabha Committee. In questions which we have not the power to dispose of they should apply directly to the State or through us, and as soon as they give up their feelings of revenge against us we shall treat them as our younger brethern and give them all help."

* Sanatan Sabha: Refer page 9 paragraph 4.

The letter is signed by the Chairman of the Shaher Sabha† Managing Committee.

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Limbdi State, let it be remembered, is not confined to the town of Limbdi but has a number of villages, of which several agriculturists have left the State along with the Bania residents of Limbdi. The Shaher Sabha is, even as its name indicates, a committee of residents of the town of Limbdi and does not even make a pretence of representing the villagers. How can anyone be expected to accept the claim of the Chairman to speak on behalf of the people of Limbdi? And as for the inquiry, all that the loyalist signatories say is truth and nothing but the truth! In the meantime we have received several reports of people wanting to go back to the State having been ordered to pay and having paid heavy fines for having dared to leave the State!

These little States have learnt from their masters the policy of 'divide and rule' to perfection. In Rajkot the Muslims and Bhayats were used to suppress a popular agitation. Limbdi has pressed into aid the Sanatanists to crush the Jain Banias and the peasants. In the meantime the agitation for responsible government and for the rule of law is going on in some form or other everywhere and can but gain in intensity with the passage of time. Will the Princes see the sign of the times and yield, or will they prefer to rush inevitably on to their doom?

On the train on Allahabad, 18-11-39 M. D.

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† For new constitution refer Chapter IX page 34. For Shaher Sabha see page 37 paragraph 2.

# PRESS OPINIONS

## "Frightfulness In Limbdi"

*Under the Caption "Frightfulness in Limbdi" the Bombay Chronicle of 18th February, 1939 writes:—*

THE statement issued by the Limbdi Praja Mandal on the recent dacoities in the State makes frightful reading. It gives further details than did Sardar Vallabhbhai's statement on the subject. The Mandal declares that "there is absolutely no safety of person or property" in the affected areas. But this seems to be true of only the members and supporters of the Mandal. For it appears that the dacoits have displayed an intriguing discrimination against them.

Says the Mandal: "February 5th was celebrated as 'Rajkot Day' at Pansina, and there was a meeting which dispersed at about 10 p. m. About 11 p. m. people heard firing all round in the village and outside. Then one by one, the houses of Praja Mandal workers or sympathisers were raided." The Mandal adds that "every one who has been attacked, injured and robbed, is either a worker or a member of the Praja Mandal," and that "another village Ralol, four miles away from Pansina, was looted the same night and only Praja Mandal workers were attacked, injured and robbed."

There must be extraordinary dacoits, indeed, who have declared a vendetta against the Praja Mandal.

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# CHARGE SHEET AGAINST LIMBDI DARBAR

## HE MUST ABDICATE OR MUST FACE TRIAL

*The Free Press Journal of 20th February, 1939 writes:—*

IT is grave news, which has been brought from Limbdi.

It is no longer possible to maintain silence about it.

The unique distinction belongs to the Limbdi Durbar for devising the most fiendish and diabolical technique for repressing the activities of the Praja Parishad.

The martial law atrocities of Punjab in 1919, which kindled the flame of National Anger, pale into insignificance, compared with the Limbdi atrocities.

No useful purpose is served by glossing over the facts.

The gravamen of the charge against the Limbdi Durbar is, that it recently mobilised professional dacoits and other objectionable classes of people to carry out dacoities accompanied by violence and inhuman torture, specifically directed against Praja Parishad workers.

### A DIABOLICAL PLAN

The Limbdi Durbar avoided the inconvenient procedure of legal action in the form of arrests, prosecutions, trials and convictions. The view was that a few doses of dacoities organised under the aegis of the State, against which there can be no defence or protection, would disillusion the workers of the Praja Parishad and dissuade them from working under the Praja Parishad flag.

### THE CHALLENGE

The Limbdi Durbar miscalculated the grit and the moral stamina of its own subjects. The Praja Parishad decided to hold a session on the 19th at Limbdi itself, to demonstrate that decoities and outrages had failed to serve their purposes. It was a challenge to the Durbar to dare to repeat the atrocities, which it tried out on an unsuspecting village, at Panshina.

### UNASHAMED BRAVADO

The Limbdi Durbar accepted the challenge. The Dewan, in the most unashamed language, proclaimed to the public, that if the Praja Parishad ventured to hold its session on the 19th, it would be attacked by a loyalist section and that the Durbar did not propose to prevent the Parishad. The meaning was clear. The Praja Parishad would be allowed to meet at Limbdi as a legal body, without any official prohibition, by the Durbar. But, the Durbar was confident that the loyal section would deal with the Praja Parishad, as the Durbar believed, the Parishad deserved to be treated.

### THE DURBAR ABDICATES.

The Limbdi Durbar has kept its word. The Durbar abdicated for the 19th instant, in favour of the loyalist section. This loyalist section, invested with the full freedom of the Limbdi State, obstructed the President-elect Durbar Gopaldas Desai at the Railway station, itself.

Durbar Gopaldas was prevented from receiving a public reception. He was allowed to proceed to his temporary residence in Limbdi and he was kept a prisoner there, by the simple expedient of the so-called loyalists laying siege to his temporary residence and preventing him from proceeding to the Praja Parishad Session.

## HOOLIGANISM IN EXCELSIS

The loyalists section also invaded the precincts of a private compound, in which the Parishad proposed to meet and tried to break up the Session, by doing violence to the pandal, dais etc., and by dealing out violence to everyone, who had assembled at the place. Notwithstanding all this hooliganism, the Praja Parishad held its session under the presidency of Mrs. Lilavati Munshi and over two thousand persons participated in it.

## VITAL ISSUES

The issues, which arise, are fundamental. What are the remedies of the subjects of a State and British Indian citizens on a temporary visit to the State, if the State organises dacoities, goondaism and maass violence, putting into danger the life and the property, of not only its own subjects, but also of British Indian visitors to its territory.

## THE DURBAR IS THE CULPRIT

The fact, that has to be borne in mind, is that in the absence of any legal prohibition of the Praja Parishad or the imposition of any restrictions on the visitors by the Durbar, the persons partaking in the Parishad were engaged in lawful activities. The Durbar was, therefore, bound to protect the Parishad workers, accepting that it had no connection with the violence of the loyalist section. Our contention is that the Durbar is the organiser of the Goondaism. Assuming, that the Durbar is innocent, he cannot plead lack of previous knowledge of the probability of violence, since it paraded the threat of violence by loyalists, in a communique. The Durbar is, therefore, either the principal or an accessory to the offence, before and after its occurrence.

## LIMBDI DURBAR MUST ABDICATE OR MUST BE TRIED

The Bombay Ministry must not rest, until it has pressed on the attention of the Crown's Representative in India, the necessity of persuading the Limbdi Durbar either to abdicate or to face a Committee of Inquiry into the allegations of organised Goondaism by the State. For less grave commissions and omissions, Indore, Bharatpur, Alwar and other Rulers have been compelled by the Crown to abdicate. Limbdi's crime is so heinous, that, unless the Crown averages it, cannot claim, any respect from the people of India.

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# GOONDAS WERE THE TOOLS

*Referring to the goondaism by which the Parishad session was disturbed the "Bombay Chronicle" (23-2-39) writes :—*

THE statement issued by Mrs. Leelavati Munshi and several other leaders who attended the Praja Parishad at Limbdi confirms the worst suspicions that were raised by the previous reports about the unrestrained goondaism let loose on the people of the State. The recent peculiar dacoities in the State, wherein only the workers and sympathisers of the Praja Mandal were the victims, are by now known to all and have told their own tale. It is significant that, though the reports of these dacoities were vouched far by many, the Diwan described them as considerably exaggerated but did not—perhaps dared not—give a full version of his own. In fact he raised fresh suspicions when in another statement he said with regard to the convening of the Parishad that "the responsibility for any unfortunate eventualities that may follow the meeting of the Parishad must rest on the shoulders of the Praja Mandal." We cannot say what precisely he meant, but the goondas in the State seem to have understood him to mean that if they brought about any ugly eventualities, the Mandal, and not they, might be held responsible.

## WANTED AN INQUIRY

As a matter of fact the goondas did let themselves loose on the Parishad. Though there was a ban on the carrying of lathis, hundreds of goondas, armed with lathis and swords went about belabouring the peasants who had come from far and near to attend the Parishad, prevented Darbar Gopaldas, the President-elect of the Parishad, from attending it and held him a prisoner near the station. They assaulted and wounded about 600 persons who had come to attend the Parishad, several of whom were young boys. It is amazing that such things can happen in a place where a Government is supposed to be functioning. But perhaps the most amazing part of the whole affair is the testimony of Mrs. Munshi and her colleagues that in all their rounds from 1 to 4 p. m. they "hardly saw any police and the few that were there made no attempt to control the mob or to disarm them". They state further:

> "Some of the wounded informed us that they had recognised some of those who had belaboured them, to be State Servants and Policemen. . . .
>
> The complete inactivity on the part of the State Authorities was amazing. The situation was extremely grave, but the State appeared to have no anxiety about it and made no attempt to control or ease the situation".

From the testimony of these persons and several others the suspicion naturally arises, that the goondas were the tools of some unscrupulous officials. It will be in the interests of the higher authorities themselves, whose reputation is most at stake, to make an impartial and searching inquiry into these atrocities and bring to book the persons responsible for them, whoever they may be.

# ORGANISED VIOLENCE

*The "Hitavada" of Nagpur the organ of the Servants of India Society (23-2-39) writes:—*

THE recent disturbances in the Limbdi State at the time when the Praja Parishad was being organised at Limbdi throw a new light on the tactics that the Indian States' Rulers intend to adopt in repressing the popular struggle.

In a statement issued *from the Limbdi Praja Mandal office in Bombay*, it is alleged that strenuous efforts were made to prevent the Kisans from coming from villages to attend the Parishad. In spite of these efforts, 2500 peasants reached Limbdi. Having failed to frustrate the motives of the holders of the Praja Parishad by dissuading the population from attending the Parishad, the State gathered under the name of Sanatan Mandal some five hundred persons.

These persons were armed with lathis, dharias and other lethal weapons including guns and paraded the streets. The Sanatan Mandal people even went to the length of preventing the President-elect of the Parishad from reaching the place of the Conference and held him up at the Station. Not only this. The Praja Parishad people were physically attacked and attempts made to terrorise them into abandoning the Conference. Ultimately, the Conference had to be held under the presidentship of Mrs. Lilavati Munshi as the President-elect could not reach the place of the Parishad.

The State seems to have taken a queer attitude towards this violence and mob rule. No attempt was made to prevent violence and restore order. On the contrary, the State seems to have a clear conscience and does not seem itself responsible for what has happened, precisely because it has warned the populace that the holding of the Conference would lead to a disturbance. So, for the State, the present disturbance is only the justification of its anxieties. Normally, if the State apprehended the Praja Parishad, people did not offer any provocation for any violent reaction on the part of the so-called Sanatan Mandal, one does not see any reason why such violence was permitted unchallenged by the State authority. This state of affairs certainly lends colour to the suspicion that the violence was organised if not at the direct instigation of the State, at least without the discouragement of the State authorities.

*Instead of prohibiting or banning the Parishad if the Limbdi State has found out this new method of supressing the agitation, we must say the State is treading on dangerous grounds. Such mob fury and violence have a pernicious and an epidemic character about them.* If the lessons in the open and brazen-faced flouting of peace and order are taught by the State itself it will not take long time before the general population begins to learn its lessons and parade them in a frenzied way, a contingency which should be avoided.

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# EXISTENCE IMPOSSIBLE

*Refering to atrocities and economical boycott of Limbbi State, The "Indian Express" of Madras writes the following in its issue dated 16-8-39.*

THE statement of Mr. Bapalal Keshavlal Doshi, Secretary of the Limbdi Praja Mandal, published on another page of this issue, speaks for itself. A truly terrible system of repression apparently prevails in the State, and Mr. Bapalal describes how more than half the population of the capital and one hundred peasant families from villages fled to adjoining territory from Limbdi leaving all property behind, so unsafe had their existence become under the Ruler's tyrannical regime. To exert pressure on the Durbar for the restoration of just administration, the Praja Mandal organised a boycott campaign against Limbdi cotton, and not a bale of this cotton could be sold in the last six months in Bombay and neighbouring markets. The boycott movement is aimed at a recalcitrant Ruler to compel him to abandon ways of repression and tyrannical misrule, and it is a device of self-protection on the part of a victimised people. Merchants purchasing Limbdi cotton will be guilty of supporting a tyrannical regime against defenders of Civil liberty in a badly-governed State, and we are sanguine enough to hope that no South Indian mill-owner will have any relish for so ignominious a role, which even a section of foreign buyers like the Japanese, with no obligations to Indians in political distress, found unenviable and had the good sense to avoid.

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# PARAMOUNT POWER'S RESPONSIBILITY

*The Hindusthan Times (Delhi) writes :—*

THE Limbdi atrocities aroused widespread indignation when they came to be known in the countries. The Press with one voice condemned the Durbar's capability and demanded Justice to the oppressed people.

The hooliganism in Limbdi and Asodha, where deliberate and violent attempts were made to break up the session of the Praja Parishad and the Congress Satyagraha Conference raises grave issues which cannot be passed over lightly. Limbdi first burst into the limelight when Sardar Patel issued his statement relating how Praja Mandal workers in the State were attacked by hooligans in their houses, which were set on fire, and the looted property was carried away by them in lorries and motor cars. The State then issued a communique describing the allegations as a grossly exaggarated account of dacoities committed in the State.

Why dacoits should have singled out Praja-Mandal workers for assault and robbery, was not explained. Later, when it became known that the Praja Parishad was going to be held on February, 19, the Dewan of Limbdi issued a statement to the press, which throws a sinister light on the happenings in the State on Sunday last. In that statement, there is ample evidence of instigation by the State to mischief makers to break up the Parishad when it was held.

## INSTIGATION MISCHIEF

In that statement the Dewan referred to petition submitted by 2400 residents of Limbdi objecting to the holding of the Parishad and appealing to the authorities to ban the meeting. Proceeding the Dewan argued that, since the petitioners represented more than 50 per cent of the population of the town, and since most of the grievances which the Praja Mandal wanted to remove had already been removed, there was no need for the Mandal to hold the Parishad. As an additional reason, he pointed out that the State was forming an Advisory Committee with a President and eight members of whom four would be nominees of the Sanatan Sabha to draft a suitable constitution for the State. He wound up ultimately, by saying that though he did not wish to curb the civil liberties of the people by banning the Parishad, the responsibility for any unfortunate consequences following from the holding of the Parishad must rest on the Mandal. From subsequent events it would appear that it would have been more honourable for the State to have banned the meeting outright, instead of instigating hooligans to break the sessions.

## PARAMOUNT POWER'S RESPONSIBILITY

Taking it at its worst even if the Parishad represents only a minority of the population of Limbdi it must be free to meet and discuss its grievances so long as it acts constitutionally. If the opponents of the Mandal were in a majority as the Dewan alleges and if they were bent on preventing the meeting was it not his duty to take steps to prevent such mischief? That, inspite of the fact that he knew that attempts would be made to break up the Parishad he did nothing to prevent the mischief, is eloquent of the inspiration behind this exhibition of goondaism. What has the Paramount Power to say about hooliganism instigated and encouraged by the State administration from which the sufferers are the peoples of the State?

# CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE STATE

THE following correspondence passed between the State and (1) The Indian Merchants' Chamber (2) The Limbdi Rajya Praja Mandal and (3) Sjt. Ratilal Sheth.

The Indian Merchants' Chamber wrote about the State ban on the migrator merchants taking away their mercantile goods out of State tarritory. The Limbdi Rajya Praja Mandal wrote about the State taking away all the mercantile goods from the shops of the migrator merchants. Sjt. Ratilal Sheth has written about his house being confiscated and sold out to anybody else. *Every one of these letters is still unreplied.*

No. 1248. Mahatma Gandhi Road, Fort, Bombay.
24th May, 1939.

From :— J. K. Mehta, Esqr., M.A.,
Secretary, The Indian Merchants' Chamber.

To :— The Dewan Saheb of Limbdi State,
Limbdi.

Sir,

It has come to the knowledge of the Committee of this Chamber that some time ago a large number of business people of Limbdi have suddenly left their places of business and their residences in the Limbdi State and gone to the neighbouring States or the British territories on a *hijrat.* Several of these businessmen are connected with or have business relations in the City of Bombay. This Chamber, consisting as it does of business people and with its objective of safeguarding the interests of businessmen, has been deeply concerned with the condition of these people. My Committee are not concerned with any political issues on which there might be any differences of opinion between the State and these businessmen. What they are concerned with principally, however, is that these traders and merchants of Limbdi, who have suddenly left their hearths and homes, are not ruined. Businessmen all over the country, whether in British India or in Indian States, are the very salt of the earth, and the prosperity of the States depends upon the goodwill and the loyalty of these businessmen. In fact in all the Indian States, if my Committee may presume to bring it to your notice, the Mahajans were, once upon a time, trusted of the rulers and were the props and pillars of the States. That such Mahajans should, as a whole, make a *hijrat* and go out of the State, bespeaks that they must have got some grievance, as otherwise, with their traditions and conventions, they would not leave their places of residence, their property and their business connections and go away to other territories.

My Committee are informed that a duty of one anna in the Rupee was levied on all goods which were taken or attempted to be taken away from the State; that some property was taken away on payment of such a duty, and that recently the State has prohibited property being taken away even on payment of such an export duty. This will inflict, if it is

true, untold hardships on the merchants and traders, and they will be entirely ruined. It cannot be, or ought not to be, the object of the State to ruin these traders and merchants, who are subjects of the State, and my Committee are sure that the State authorities would not be vindictive or persecuting these people after they have left the State. If through any reason they do not want to return to the State, the State authorities should not place any insuperable obsatcles in their way and specially not do anything which will ruin them permanently. If they are not allowed under any circumstances to take away their property, it will mean that the crops and their property and belongings will be ruined; that the stuff in their shops will get spoiled, and even their houses and other property may get deteriorated or destroyed.

Under the circumstances, my Committee beg to request you to be pleased to arrange that any merchants or traders, who want to take away their property, will be allowed to do so on payment of the export cess, without any difficulty or interference whatsoever wither from the State authorities or from any private individuals. My Committee hope that in the general interests of trade and industries, the Limbdi State will be pleased to issue orders accordingly.

I beg to remain,
Your most obedient servant,
Sd|-. J. K. MEHTA,
*Secretary.*

*Copy of letter from the Dewan, Limbdi State, Limbdi, dated 1st June 1939 to the Secreatry Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay.*

"..... I have received your letter of the 24th May 1939, and am sorry to observe that some misunderstanding regarding the export of goods from the town of Limbdi seems to have been created by interested parties as there is no prohibitory order by the State banning such export. If, however, the merchants of Limbdi who have approached you have any grievances, they may be advised to approach the Merchants' Association of Limbdi who will do the needful.

No. 1557. Bombay, 20th June, 1939.

From :— J. K. Mehta, Esq; M.A.,
Secretary, The Indian Merchants' Chamber.

To :— The Dewan Saheb of Limbdi,
Limbdi.

Dear Sir,

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 1st June 1939, for which I thank you. There is no misunderstanding so far as the Committee of this Chamber are concerned. They are glad to note that there is no prohibitory order by the State regarding the export of goods from the State by merchants and businessmen. The Committee, however, are informed by merchants that the State does not permit

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# STATE NOTIFICATIONS

In this Chapter all the notifications issued by the State are given. First notification was issued three days after Panshina and Ralol Dacoities. Second notification was issued two days before the conference; this notification was followed by a pamphlet issued by the Sanatan Mandal. This pamphlet is published with the II notification. The third notification was issued three days after the conference atrocities. Black types in the II notification are ours.

*(Translation of the Gujerati Notification).*

## I. NOTIFICATION.

Reports have been circulated creating consternation following the dacoity in Pansina. The State is properly investigating into this dacoity and a special Officer has been appointed for the purpose. A police party has been posted at Panshina to remove the fear of the people. People have been assured by this action. Moreover, by this Notification, it is notified to the entire public that there is no cause to have any fear.

FATEHSINHJI,

Limbdi, 8-2-1939. Dewan, Limbdi State.

*(Translation of the Gujerati Notification).*

## II. NOTIFICATION.

The State have received some applications with signatures of nearly 2400 adults residing in Limbdi city wherein they declare that they not being in agreement with the policy of the Praja Mandal, object to that institution styling itself as Prajamandal. They also challenge therein, the right of that institution to hold a Conference the name of the people and therefore they desire the State to ban the Conference convened by Prajamandal to be held on 19-2-1939.

According to the census of 1931 Limbdi has the population of 6852 males. If 50% of these namely children and mniors are excluded Limbdi has the population of 3400 adults. According to this calculation 72% of the adult population of Limbdi are against holding the Conference on the 19th. Similar applications have been received from members of village committees of 30 villages. They are elected by votes of adult farmers of the village concerned.

The State has 38 State owned villages the male population of which in 1931 was 11472. Therefore 80% of the villages and 77% of village population are against holding the Conference on the 19th. In short nearly 75% of the people of Limbdi State object to holding the Conference and of the remaining 25% who have not enlisted their opposition there is no proof that everyone of them is in the favour of holding the

Conference. Even if this position is granted the 19th Conference could speak only in name of the minority of the people. The main object of the conference is to demand certain concessions. Many of these demands and others have been granted in villages where village Panchayats have got wide powers of self-government by the establishment of village Panchayats. The organisation of cheap and immediate justice, the regulation of the vote of local taxation, the works of nation building locally such as Schools, dispensaries, water-tanks and control over expenditure on village improvement works. These powers and rights are entrusted to the villagers. Over and above this the power of appointment and dismissal of local revenue servants is handed over to the Panchayats. These powers and rights are granted to them without levying any new tax on them. In reality they can reduce the rate of local taxation if they deem it fit. The best and the short course to achieving the benefits of the establishment of Panchayats is for the Prajamandal to stop its present activities and to abandon the idea of holding the Conference. If this be done, a peasants' committee constituted of the representatives of the village Panchayats could be convened to administer in matters relating to the interests of the farmers of this State.

The State has sometime ago declared its intention to nominate an advisory committee to devise a suitable scheme of constitution. This proposal having not been accepted and the State having adopted the policy of establishing village panchayats after conferring with elected representatives of the villages, there is now no need of such a committee. But the State will appoint an advisory committee of 8 and a chairman with a view to grant city council for the local administration of Limbdi city. Four of these will be nominated by Sanatan Sabha and the remaining four non-officials, of which one shall be a moslem and the chairman will be nominated by the State.

In these circumstances the holding of a Conference which can speak for the minority is felt unnecessary. The concessions that they aim at securing and some more concessions are granted to many of the villages and if the Prajamandal stops its activities and agitation similar concessions will be granted to the remaining villages. It is clearly inadvisable to hold the Conference in face of the strong opposition of the large section of the people. In these circumstances disturbances may take place by the situation getting serious due to the holding of the Conference.

However the State does not want to encroach upon the primary rights of the people by banning the Conference. But if inspite of the knowledge of this grave situation the Conference meets and if distressing events take place the responsibility will be wholly Prajamandals.

Limbdi, 16-2-1939.

Sd|- FATEH SINGH.
Dewan, Limbdi State.

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## NOTIFICATION II, 16-2-1939.

On the same day was issued another notification and was placed on walls in villages. It was handwritten and it said:—

**"It is to be notified in connection with the notification of 16-2-39 that as mentioned in it those who attend the Conference which is to be held against the opposition of the majority of the people will be considered the opponents of the State and the local officers should write down their names".**

## PUBLIC WARNING TO BANIA MANDAL.

The so called Prajamandal (Bania Mandal) have convened a peoples conference to meet on the 19-2-39 in the name of people of Limbdi inspite of the opposition of the majority of the people. The Sanatan Subjects of this state are going to attend this conference in large numbers to demonstrate their peaceful opposition. They have the right to attend it. Mandal tries to stop entry by cordon or by holding the conference behind closed doors attempts will be made to enter the pandal by breaking the cordon. Bania Mandal is therefore warned not to place any such obstacle and if inspite of the warning an obstacle is placed the Sanatanists will enter the pendol at any cost and if in so doing a breach of peace is resulted Bania Mandal will be held responsible for it.

Limbdi, 18th February, 1939.

Secretary,
Sanatan Dharma Sabha, Limbdi.

*(Translation of a Gujerati Notification).*

## III. NOTIFICATION.

It has come to our knowledge that some people are creating an atmosphere of consternation in the City by spreading false rumours. Legal action will be taken against persons spreading such false rumours.

All the people should quietly and without any anxiety go about their business without paying any attention to such mean rumours.

FATHESINHJI,
Dewan, Limbdi State.

Limbdi, 22-2-39.

—:0:—

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# STATE NOTIFICATIONS

## I

### CONCERNING CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

*Translation of Notification dated 10th January, 1939.*

His Highness the Yuvraj Saheb made a declaration as follows to the leaders of the people on 8-1-39 regarding the nature of the constitution that should be established in Limbdi State:—

"I have decided that the constitution of Limbdi should be such as will suit the natural genius and aspirations of the people of Limbdi consistent with the Obligations of His Highness the Thakore Saheb towards the Paramount Power and the personal prerogatives of His Highness as a Ruler. A draft of such constitution will be prepared with the advice and assistance of an Advisory Committee of eight members. Three members of such Advisory Committee of whom one shall be a farmer, shall be appointed by the Praja Mandal; three members of whom one shall be a farmer, shall be appointed by the Sanatan Mandal and two members will be appointed by the State.

"Arrangement will be made in such manner as may be advised by the said Committee to ascertain whether the draft so prepared by the Advisory Committee is suited to the natural genius and aspirations of the people of Limbdi or not.

"I cannot give any idea as to the nature of the draft constitution that will be framed with the assistance of the Advisory Committee, but during the last few days I have discussed this matter with certain persons, and mention has been made of my views in public meetings. In doing so, I find certain misunderstandings have arisen which need an explanation. It has been said that it is my desire to separate the villages from the City, and leave the villages in the condition in which they are at present. It is my desire that Limbdi City and every village in the State should have equal freedom as regards local questions, that is to say that every person residing in a village should have the same power in connection with local questions concerning his village as a citizen of Limbdi has in connection with local questions concerning Limbdi City. And thereafter, it is my aim to connect the City and the villages, which enjoy local self-government in a sort of Federation, just like the members of an undivided family or life father and sons. I will place these views of mine before the Advisory Committee firmly.

"The people are being told in public meetings to be ready for a fight against the State if necessary, to obtain responsible government. Such propaganda is harmful to the harmonious relations that exist between the State and the people. Not only that, but such propaganda is unnecessary when the State is prepared to frame a constitution according to the wishes of the people, and therefore there is no need for any propaganda in the villages. If, therefore, the said propaganda is discontinued in Limbdi City, and if the Praja Mandal and the Sanatan Mandal assure the State that they will do no propaganda in the villages, and if both the institutions

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appoint their representatives for the Advisory Committee, the work of the Advisory Committee will begin immediately."

"It is the desire of His Highness the Yuvraj Saheb that every activity concerning a village shall be carried on by a Village Committee, that is to say that every Village Committee will make the necessary arrangement to utilise the income from Saba Vrit Charity, Gamat, Kharajat, etc. for village improvement.

"Recently His Highness the Yuvraj Saheb has given certain concessions to the village people, and he is always ready to remove every grievance of the people. That is well-known to all. Therefore, everyone should act peacefully without any fear of threat, coercion or pressure from anyone.

"A booklet by name "A scheme for Rural reconstruction" has been published. Therein is a scheme for Co-operative Society that is for consideration, and there is no desire to introduce it compulsarily."

Dated 10-1-1939.

(Sd.) Fatehsinhji,
Dewan, Limbdi State.

II

*Notification dated 16th February* 1939

For this notification see page 110.

III

*Translation of a Notification dated 25th March,* 1939.

"In the notification dated 16-2-1939, the State had declared its resolution to appoint an Advisory Committee, consisting of 8 members and a President with a view to grant local self-government to the citizens of Limbdi. It was also declared that of these (eight members) 4 members were to be appointed by the Sanatan Mandal and four were to be non-official members, and the President was to be appointed by the State.

"On the Sanatan Mandal being called upon to appoint its four members, the Mandal asked permission to appoint six members instead of four and that demand was granted.

"We have received the names of these six members appointed by the Sanatan Mandal which are as follows:—

(1) Dayaram Ganeshji Vakil,
(2) Trambaklal Nanalal Acharya,
(3) Durgashanker Manishanker Upadhaya,
(4) Maneklal Mayashanker Acharya,
(5) Harishankar Ishwarlal Joshi, and
(6) Mathradas Gordhan Gagga.

"The following 5 non-official members are appointed by the State:—

(1) Vora Hasenally Shamshuddin,
(2) Guab Alam Solanki,
(3) Shah Chakkubhai Gulabchand,
(4) Shah Chatrabhuj Laherchand, and
(5) Patel Lakhman Jhaver.

"These eleven members are given the power to appoint a President instead of the President being appointed by the State. Rana Shri Balubhai Jethibhai is appointed the Secretary of this Committee, and he will do all the work in connection with the proceedings of the Committee. But he will have no right of vote.

"The first meeting of the Committee shall be held at 11 o'clock on 2-4-39 in the Darbargarh, and at that time the Committee will elect the Chairman and begin its work. Thereafter, the President will be entitled to call a meeting of the Committee, and it is hoped that the recommendations of the Committee will be forwarded to us at an early opportunity by the President of the Committee.

"On the recommendation of the above Committee, a City Council will be established. And after a Village Panchayat is established in every village, the ideal of the Yuvraj Saheb to frame a Federal constitution for the City and every village enjoying local self-government will become possible. But the time has come to consider what kind of Federal constitution will be suited to the natural genius and aspirations of the people, and to consider what procedure should be followed in order to prepare such a constitution, and therefore the State has decided to call a conference of the leaders of the people.

"The above mentioned eleven members of the City Council Advisory Committee will be invited to take part in this Conference, and the village Panchayats will elect from amongst themselves the representatives of the villages as follows:—

The Village Panchayat of all the villages of Limbdi District except Limbdi City and the Village Panchayat of Rangpur will appoint one member,

The Village Panchayat of all the villages of Ranagarh District will appoint one member,

The VVillage Panchayat of the villages of Rojasar District will appoint one member,

The Village Panchayat of the villages of Shiani District will appoint two members.

The Village Panchayat of the villages of Pansina District and the Village Panchayat of the villages of Anandpur and Ganashayapur will appoint two members,

Similarly the Village Panchayat of the villages of Ralol and Jamu District will each appoint two members.

"Over and above these, the State will appoint six other members who can represent other communities and classes such as Bhayat, Garasya, Brahmin, etc.

"Every Village Panchayat should arrange to send us the names of their members before 10-4-1939, ~~and after~~ the names are received, arrangement will be made to call the conference at the earliest opportunity."

25th March, 1939.

(Sd.) Fatehsinhji,
Dewan, Limbdi State.

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# LIMBDI DAY

## CELEBRATION ALL OVER INDIA

Since 19th February 1939, the day on which "Jalianwala Baug" tragedy was repeated in Limbdi and people had to migrate, "Limbdi Day" is being celebrated every month on that date and demand for justice is being reiterated.

On 19th October 1939 eighth "Limbdi Day" was celebrated at (1) Bombay, (2) Karachi, (3) Madras, (4) Ahmedabad, (5) Baroda, (6) Indore, (7) Viramgam, (8) Wadhwan Camp, (9) Bhavnager (10) Rajkot, (11) Godhra, (12) Cambay, (13) Harij, (14) Navsari, (15) Dholera, (16) Chotila, (17) Palitana, (18) Arnej, (19) Vala, (20) Chuda, (21) Bochasan.

The following resolution was passed at the meeting and was sent to:—

(1) H. E. The Crown Representative at New Delhi.

(2) The Hon'ble Mr. Gibson, Resident at Rajkot.

(3) The Thakore Saheb at Limbdi.

### RESOLUTION

This public meeting of the citizens of...views with grave concern the continued and increasing reign of terror and repression in Limbdi State. The undisputed facts prove that there is no rule of law or any safety of person or property left in Limbdi State. There is a regular loot of people's property. The ruler has disregarded the appeals of Mahatma Gandhi to make peace with his people. The Paramount Power has remained for over eight months a silent spectator of this rule of barbarism. The Paramount Power owes a duty to the people of Limbdi State to hold an impartial inquiry into the charges maed against the ruler. The anarchic conditions in Limbdi State have affected like a plague the adjoining British territory, and the lives and property of its residents.

This meeting draws the attention of the Paramount Power to the lawless condition in Limbdi State and appeals to the Paramount Power to do its duty to the people of Limbdi. This meeting also appeals to the Thakore Saheb of Limbdi to listen to the appeals of Mahatma Gandhi and improve the situation before it is too late.

This meeting expresses its profound sympathy with th epeople of Limbdi and offers its hearty congratulations to those who have bravely resisted the forces of repression against heavy odds.

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# "INDIA IN CRISIS"

**"TOO SMALL TO SURVIVE AS SOVEREIGN UNITS..... THEY COULD NOT SUPPORT A MODERN ADMINISTRATION"**

**Extract from the "New Statesman and Nation" (London Weekly) dated 12th August 1939, Vol. XVIII, No. 442 (New Series) under the caption "India in the Crisis" Page 235....**

**".... Few of us have any illusions about the character of the majority of the States. Most of them, to begin with, are too small to survive as Sovereign Units, even within a federation, and some of them are in extent and population mere parishes, which could not support a modern administration, even if they were freed from the incubus of maintaining the pomp of their rulers......**

**In none of them, do the subjects enjoy any recognised civil rights of Assembly and free speech; save at the ruler's pleasure. In few of them is his Privy purse separated from the public expenditure. He taxes that is to say and spends as he pleases.**

**Beyond these verifiable facts, stretches a penumbra of extortion and violence difficult to penetrate. One catches a glimpse of it, however, when some aggravation of the usual misrule drives the people to desperation.**

***Faced the other day with demands for reform backed only by passive protest, the ruler of the little State of Limbdi in Kathiawar is said to have retaliated by organising bands of gangsters who beat, looted and burned. That is an ex-parte statement, which one might be disposed to treat as exaggerated, were it not that 6,000 persons out of a population of 40,000 were driven into flight and took refuge in neighbouring territories."* (*Italic Ours*)**

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# ભાવનગર પ્રજાપરિષદ

પાંચમું અધિવેશન

* ભાવનગર *

પ્રમુખશ્રી

## સરદાર વલ્લભભાઈ પટેલનું

## પ્રવચન

તા૦ ૧૪—૧૫, મે, ૧૯૩૯

ભાઇઓ અને બહેનો,

**ભા**વનગર પ્રજા પરિષદના આ પાંચમા અધિવેશનનું પ્રમુખસ્થાન શોભાવવાની અને એની જવાબદારી ઉપાડવાની લાયકાત અને શકિતવાળા તમારામાં ઘણાય હોવા છતાં આ બોજો મારે માથે નાંખવાનો નિર્ણય કરીને તમે સૌએ એક અવાજે મારામાં જે વિશ્વાસ મૂકયો છે અને મને માન આપ્યું છે તે માટે હું તમારો આભાર માનું છું.

## અસાધારણ પરિસ્થિતિ

સાધારણ સંજોગોમાં તો હું આ બોજો ઉપાડવાનું કબુલ પણ ન કરૂં એવી મારી અત્યારની સ્થિતિ છે એ તમે જાણો છો. પણ દેશી રિયાસતોની આજની અસાધારણ પરિસ્થિતિમાં અને કાઠિયાવાડના આજના કઠણ કાળ વખતે ખરેખરી ભીડ વચ્ચે તમે મને યાદ કર્યો એટલે તમારા આગ્રહનો હું અનાદર કરી શકયો નહિ. અને એ સ્થિતિમાં તમારી સૌની સહાયતા અને ઉદારતાની અપેક્ષાએ આ જવાબદારી ઉચકવાની મેં હિમ્મત કરી છે.

## દુનિયાની ઉથલપાથલો

આપણું ગયું અધિવેશન કુંડલામાં ભરાયું ત્યાર પછીના વરસ દોઢ વરસના ટૂંકા અરસામાં તો દુનિયાના કેટલાય ભાગમાં કૈક અણધારી ઉથલપાથલો થઇ રહી છે. નવા ઇતિહાસનાં પાનાં ઝપાટાભેર લખાઇ રહ્યાં છે. જગતના નકશાના રંગ એકાએક બદલાવા લાગ્યા છે. ભલભલાં મહારાજ્યો વચ્ચે થએલા પવિત્ર કોલકરારોની કિંમત રદી કાગળ જેટલી લેખાઇ. જરાયે સંકોચ વિના તેને ફટાફટ ફાડીને કચરાની ટોપલીને સ્વાધીન કરવામાં આવ્યાનાં દ્રશ્ય સૌએ જોયાં. સત્તાઓની શાહુકારી ઉપર આજે કોઇને ઇતબાર રહે એવું રહ્યું નથી. આગામી મહાસંગ્રામની તૈયારીઓ ચોમેર જોશભેર ચાલી રહી છે. દુનિયા પ્રલયને પંથે પૂરપાટ ધસી રહી છે. કાલે કોણ સલામત રહેશે એ કોઇથી કહી શકાય એમ નથી.

## દાવાનળનાં ચિહ્નો

આમ જગતમાં ચોમેર દાવાનળ સળગી રહ્યો છે. એમાંથી આપણો દેશ એકલો કઇ રીતે અલગ રહી શકે? વળી આપણો દેશ પરાધીન હોવાથી

જગત પ્રલયને પંથે ઝપાટાભેર દોડી રહ્યું છે

કોઇપણ કારણે મહાસંગ્રામ શરૂ થાય (અને જે થઇ પડવાનાં ચિન્હો અત્યારે નજરે પડે છે) તો તેમાં જોડાવામાં યા તેનાથી અલગ રહેવામાં આપણું હિત કે અહિત રહેલું છે એનો નિર્ણય કરવાની પણ આપણને સ્વતંત્રતા નથી.

## ક્રાન્તિકાળની અસર

કુંડલા પરિષદ પછીના ટુંક સમયમાં આપણો દેશ પણ આ ક્રાન્તિકાળની અસરથી બચ્યો નથી. વિજ્ઞાનની નવી નવી શોધો અને સાધનોએ આજના જગતને સાંકડું-લગભગ એકજ દેશ જેવડું-કરી મેલવા માંડ્યું છે. એટલે નવા નવા વિચારો અને આંદોલનોની અસરથી ભારતવર્ષ અલિપ્ત કઇ રીતે રહી શકે? વળી બ્રિટીશ હિંદુસ્તાનમાં વિસ્તૃત મતાધિકારવાળું, પ્રાંતીય સ્વાયત્તતાના સિદ્ધાંતને અનુસરતું નવું વિધાન અમલમાં મૂકાઇ ચૂક્યું છે. આ મર્યાદિત લોકશાસનના અમલમાં પણ પડોશના બ્રિટીશ પ્રાંતોની પ્રજા જે આત્મવિશ્વાસ અને ચેતનના અવનવા સુખનો અનુભવ કરી રહેલ છે તેની અસર દેશી રાજ્યોની પ્રજા ઉપર રોજ રોજ પડતી જાય છે. અનેક ખામીઓવાળા છતાં આ નવા વિધાનનો વિવેકપૂર્વક ઉપયોગ કરી ભારતવર્ષની સર્વમાન્ય સંસ્થા કોંગ્રેસે દેશની શકિત અને પ્રતિષ્ઠામાં વધારો કર્યો છે. સાથે સાથે નવા વિધાનમાં રહેલી અનેક ત્રૂટીઓ અને લોકશાસનના પ્રથમ અનુભવમાંથી ઉદ્દભવતી સ્વાભાવિક મુસ્કેલીઓએ જે નવી નવી કઠણ સમસ્યાઓ ઉભી કરી છે. તેનો સફળતાપૂર્વક ઉકેલ કરવામાં અનેક લોકનિયુકત સેવકો અને સંગઠિત સંસ્થાઓ રાત દિવસ કામ કરી રહેલ છે. લોકકલ્યાણનાં નવાં નવાં કામો અને કાયદાઓ એક પછી એક ઉપરા ઉપરી હાથ ધરવામાં આવ્યા છે.

## નવચેતનનો સ્પર્શ

બ્રિટિશ હિંદુસ્તાનમાં ચોમેર પ્રચંડ જાગૃતિ અને ક્રાંતિના સૂસવતા વંટોળ ફૂંકાઇ રહ્યા છે. આ નવચેતનનો સ્પર્શ દેશી રાજ્યોની પ્રજાને થતાંની સાથે એનામાં નવી નવી આશાઓ ઉત્પન્ન થવા પામી છે, અને બ્રિટીશ હિંદુસ્તાનથી પાછળ પડી જવાનો સ્વાભાવિક ભય લાગવાથી એની સાથે સાથે દોડવાનો નિશ્ચય અને પ્રયત્ન કરી રહેલ છે. પરિણામે અનેક દેશી રાજ્યોમાંથી પણ પોતપોતાને ત્યાંનાં રાજ્યતંત્રોમાં જુદા જુદા રૂપમાં

યુગને અનુકૂળ ફેરફાર કરવાની મજબુત માગણીઓ અને વ્યવસ્થિત ચળવળો શરૂ થઇ ચુકેલ છે. સદીઓ થયાં એકહથ્થુ સત્તાનાં બંધનોમાં જકડાએલી પ્રજા ચોમેર નવયુગની સ્વતંત્રતાના પવનની ઝડીઓથી જાગી ઉઠી હોવાથી એને પુરાણો, સડી ગએલો અને ચાલતો આવેલો અમલ અસહ્ય અને અકારો થઇ પડયો છે.

કોઇ ખાસ રાજામહારાજાના વ્યકિતગત સારાખોટાનો આ સવાલ મુદ્દલ નથી. આજના લોકશાસનના યુગથી કેવળ ઉલટી એકહથ્થુ રાજ્યસત્તાની આ પદ્ધતિ, જેનો જોટો જગતમાં બીજે કયાંએ મળી શકે તેમ નથી, તેની સામેનો પીડીત પ્રજાના અંતરનો આ પોકાર છે. એની સામે આંખ આડા કાન કર્યે કોઇ રસ્તો નીકળવાનો નથી.

## રાજાઓની સમસ્યા

બ્રિટિશ હિંદુસ્તાનમાં દાખલ થએલા નવા વિધાનનો બીજો ભાગ જેની સાથે દેશી રાજ્યોને સીધો સંબંધ આવે છે અને જેનાથી સમગ્ર ભારતવર્ષને એકત્ર બનાવવાની સામ્રાજ્યના મુત્સદીઓ આશા સેવી રહેલ છે તે સમવાયતંત્રની યોજના તો હજુ અધ્ધર લટકી રહેલ છે.

એમાં દાખલ થવાની છેવટની ચોખ્ખી હા અગર ના ભણવાની નોટીસ રાજાઓને મળી ચુકી છે. આનો નિર્ણય કરવામાં દેશી રાજ્યોની પ્રજાના અવાજને મુદ્દલ સ્થાન આપવામાં આવ્યું નથી અને રાજાઓ એક તરફ કૂવો અને બીજી તરફ ખાઇ એમ બેઉ બાજુએ ભય દેખી રહ્યા છે.

કોંગ્રેસે પોતાનો નિર્ણય વારંવાર જાહેર કરી દીધો છે. લોકશાસનને પંથે પળતા બ્રિટિશ હિંદને ગળે એકહથ્થુ શાસનવાળાં દેશી રાજ્યોની ભારરૂપ હાંસડી તેની ઇચ્છા વિરૂદ્ધ ભેરવવાનો પ્રયત્ન કરવામાં આવશે તો આ દેશમાં ભયંકર અશાંતિ થવાની આગાહી કોંગ્રેસે પોકારેલી છે.

## હરિપુરાની ચોખવટ

હરિપુરાની કોંગ્રેસ પહેલાં દેશી રાજ્યોની પ્રજાના દિલમાં કોંગ્રેસની નીતિ વિષે કંઇક અંદેશો હતો. હરિપુરામાં કોંગ્રેસે દેશી રાજ્યોને લગતી તેની નીતિ વિષે ચોખવટ કરી. એ નીતિ ઉપર કોંગ્રેસ આજે પણ કાયમ છે. કોંગ્રેસ રાજાઓનો નાશ માગતી નથી, કે નથી તેમની દુશ્મનાવટ

પુચ્છતી. હજી પણ એ તો દેશી રાજ્યો સાથે મિત્રતા રાખવા મથે છે. પરંતુ કોંગ્રેસ એ સમસ્ત હિન્દુસ્તાનની સંસ્થા છે, તેના કોઈ એક ભાગની નથી: આખા દેશની આઝાદી પ્રાપ્ત કરવી એ એનું ધ્યેય છે. એની દૃષ્ટિ અને નીતિમાં ભારતવર્ષ આખું એક અને અવિભાજ્ય છે. એનો એક ભાગ સ્વતંત્ર અને એક ભાગ પરતંત્ર હોઈ ન શકે, અને એમ હોય તો બે વચ્ચે ભયાનક અથડામણ થયા વિના રહે નહિ. આથી હરિપુરા કોંગ્રેસમાં એ ચોખવટ કરવામાં આવી હતી કે દેશી રાજ્યોમાં જ્યાં સુધી લોકશાસનની પદ્ધતિ દાખલ કરવામાં ન આવે ત્યાં સુધી તેની સાથે જોડાવાની સમવાયતંત્રની યોજનાનો વિચાર જ કોંગ્રેસ ન કરી શકે.

## સુરાજ્ય નહિ, સ્વરાજ્ય

હરિપુરાના ઠરાવ પછી દેશી રાજ્યોમાં ઉત્તરે કાશ્મીરથી માંડીને દક્ષિણે ત્રાવણકોર સુધી અને પૂર્વના ખૂણામાં છેક ઓરિસ્સાનાં નાનાં રાજ્યોથી માંડીને પશ્ચિમે કચ્છ–કાઠિયાવાડ સુધી ચોમેર પ્રજામાં અપૂર્વ જાગૃતિ અને અસંતોષ જોવામાં આવે છે. ઠેકઠેકાણે પ્રજામંડળો સ્થપાય છે અથવા ભરાય છે અને તેના તખતા ઉપરથી જુદી જુદી માગણીઓ કરવામાં આવે છે.

આ બધી માગણીઓની પાછળ એક જ મૂળ વસ્તુનો ધ્વનિ સંભળાય છે અને તે એ છે કે પ્રજાને આજે કેવળ સુ–રાજ્ય આપવામાં આવે તોયે તેનાથી એને સંતોષ વળવાનો નથી. એને તો સ્વ–રાજ્ય એટલે પોતાને ત્યાંનું રાજ્યતંત્ર પ્રજાને જવાબદાર થાય એ જ એક તીવ્ર લગની લાગી છે. આ ભાવનાને સંતોષવા અને શાંત કરવા શુદ્ધ દાનતનાં અને સાચાં પગલાં ભરવામાં નહિ આવે તો આજની અશાંતિને કદાચ ક્ષણિક રીતે ભલે દબાવી દઈ શકાય તોયે અંતે તો એનું પરિણામ વિપરીત જ આવવાનું છે. જે વાર્યાં ન કર્યું તે હાર્યાં કર્યું એવો વખત આવીને ઊભો રહેશે.

## શહેનશાહને પગલે ચાલો

એથી મારી તો રાજામહારાજાઓને અતિશય નમ્રતાપૂર્વક વિનંતિ છે કે યોગ્ય અંકુશો સાથે રાજ્યવહિવટનો ભાર પ્રજાને માથે નાખી પોતે

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પ્રજાનો પ્રગતિમાર્ગ મોકળો કરી આપે. પ્રજાના સાચા રક્ષક બની એને આગળ દોરે અને ખુદ શહેનશાહને પગલે ચાલી રાજાપ્રજા વચ્ચેની અથડામણના ભયમાંથી કાયમને માટે નીકળી જવાની રચના કરી નિર્ભય બની જાય.

આમ કરવા રાજાઓ કેટલે દરજ્જે સ્વતંત્ર છે એ કહેવું કઠણ કહ્યું હોય તો પણ આજે ખુલ્લી રીતે તો બધો દોષ રાજાઓ ઉપર જ ઢોળાય છે. કારણ કે સાર્વભૌમ સત્તાના પ્રતિનિધિને પણ છેલ્લી નરેન્દ્રમંડળની સભામાં આવીને કેટલાક સામાન્ય અને અનિવાર્ય સુધારા દાખલ કરવાની સલાહ જાહેરપણે આપવાની ફરજ પડી. પાછલા વાઇસરોયોએ આવી સલાહ ખાનગી અથવા જાહેર રીતે અગાઉ અનેક વેળા આપેલી છે. છતાં કેટલાં રાજ્યોએ તે સ્વીકારી છે? અને ભવિષ્યમાં સ્વેચ્છાએ કેટલા સ્વીકારશે એ પણ કોણ કહી શકે!

## મુત્સદ્દીઓનો મિથ્યાવાદ

જવાબદાર રાજ્યતંત્રના નામથી જ રાજાઓ હવે ભડકવા લાગ્યા છે. કેટલાંએ પ્રજામંડળોનાં બંધારણોમાં જવાબદાર રાજતંત્ર મેળવવાનું ધ્યેય તેનાં બંધારણ ઘડાયાં ત્યારથી જ દાખલ કરવામાં આવેલું છે. અનેક વેળા કેટલીએ પરિષદોમાં જુદાં જુદાં રાજ્યોમાં જવાબદાર રાજતંત્રની માગણીના ઠરાવો કરવામાં આવેલા છે. આટલા દિવસ એવી માગણી અયોગ્ય ગણાતી નહોતી પણ અત્યારે તો જવાબદાર રાજતંત્રનું નામ જ દેશી રાજ્યના બંધારણમાં ન લઇ શકાય એમ કહેવામાં આવે છે.

આ એક મુત્સદ્દીઓએ ઉભો કરેલો મિથ્યાવાદ છે. ખરી રીતે તો પ્રજાને કશી સત્તા સોંપવી છે કે નહિ, અને સોંપવી છે તો કઇ અને કેટલી, અથવા તો, કેટલી ખરી સત્તા પ્રજાને સોંપવી છે, એ જ મહત્વનો સવાલ છે. પ્રજાને સાચી સત્તા સોંપવામાં આવે તો પછી એ રાજતંત્રને ગમે તે નામથી ઓળખવામાં આવે. એના મિથ્યાવાદમાં પડવાની કશીયે જરૂર નથી. અને જ્યાં સુધી સાચી સત્તા પ્રજાના હાથમાં નહિ આવે ત્યાંસુધી પ્રજાને કાંઇ

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કાળે સંતોષ થવાનો નથી એ વિષે પણ શંકા નથી.

પ્રજાને જોઈતી આ વસ્તુ કઇ રીતે મળી શકે એ જ વિચારવાનું રહે છે. એમાં તો મહાત્મા ગાંધીજી પોતે જ અત્યારે તો દેશી રાજ્યની પ્રજાની દોરવણી કરી રહ્યા છે. પ્રજાને માટે આ ધન્યભાગ્યનો દિવસ છે.

સત્યાગ્રહનું અમોઘ શસ્ત્ર ગાંધીજીએ હિંદુસ્તાનની પ્રજા આગળ મૂક્યું ત્યારથી જ એનામાં ખરૂં ચેતન આવ્યું છે. બ્રિટીશ હિંદમાં જે કંઇ સુધારા કે સત્તાઓ પ્રજાને મળી છે તે એને જ પ્રતાપે છે. એ જ શસ્ત્રનો ઉપયોગ દેશી રાજ્યોની પ્રજા પણ કરી શકે છે.

## સત્યાગ્રહની શરતો

પરંતુ એ શસ્ત્રનો ઉપયોગ કરવાને સારૂ અનુકૂળ વાતાવરણ અને શુદ્ધ સાધનો જોઇએ. તે ન હોય તો એનો ઉપયોગ ન થઇ શકે. કેટલાંએ જુદાં જુદાં રાજ્યોમાં પ્રજાએ નાની મોટી માગણીઓ માટે સત્યાગ્રહ શરૂ કર્યાં હતા, અનેક લોકો લડતોમાં જેલખાને પડયા હતા અને હજુ પણ છે. છતાં ગાંધીજીએ આજે એ બધાં રાજ્યોમાંના સત્યાગ્રહ મુલતવી રખાવ્યા છે. પ્રજાઓએ પણ ગાંધીજીની સલાહ માથે ચડાવીને આન્દોલન સ્થગિત કર્યાં છે. પ્રજાના ગાંધીજી ઉપરના અપૂર્વ વિશ્વાસનો આ પુરાવો છે, એટલું જ નહિ પણ, પ્રજાના ઉજ્વળ ભાવિનું એ શુભચિન્હ છે.

## જોખમો બતાવતી લાલ બત્તી

દેશમાં આજે સત્યાગ્રહને મોકળો માર્ગ કરી આપવા જેવું વાતાવરણ નથી. રાણપુર, રામદુર્ગ, ગંગપુર વગેરે સ્થળોના ભયાનક બનાવો સત્યાગ્રહના માર્ગમાં રહેલાં જોખમોની લાલબત્તી બતાવી રહેલ છે. મુલકમાં ભરેલી હિંસાત્મક વૃત્તિનો એ પડઘો છે. વળી આજે દેશભરમાં કોમ કોમ વચ્ચે ઝેર ફેલાવવામાં આવ્યાં છે. કેટલેક ઠેકાણે તો પ્રજા પરિષદોને તોડવા અને પ્રજામાં ભય ઉપજાવવા માટે ગમે તેવાં યોગ્યઅયોગ્ય સાધનોનો ઉપયોગ

કરી ગમે તેવાં મેલાં કામો કરતાં પણ સંકોચ રખાયો નથી. જેમને સત્તાઓ છોડવી પડે એવો સંભવ છે તેઓ ભય અને ક્રોધથી બેચેન થયેલા દેખાય છે. જેમને કશું ખોવાનું નથી તેવા કેટલાક તો મિથ્યા ડરથી અને ગેરસમજથી પારકાના હાથમાં હથિયાર બની ખરૂં ખોટું વિચારી જોયા વિના ગમે તે કરવા તૈયાર થઇ ગયા છે.

પરદેશીઓને ભાગલા પાડીને સત્તા ચલાવવાની નીતિનું અનુકરણ કરી એમાં જ પોતાની સત્તાની સલામતી માની બેઠેલા છે. આવા પ્રતિકૂળ વાતાવરણમાં સત્યાગ્રહને સ્થગિત કરી અંતરદ્રષ્ટિ કરી આત્મનિરીક્ષણમાં અને આપણી ત્રૂટીઓ તપાસી તે સુધારી લેવામાં થોડો સમય ગાળવાથી દેશી રાજ્યોની પ્રજાને લાભ જ થવાનો છે. જેને પ્રજાની શક્તિ વિષે અને પોતાના સાધનોને વિષે પુર્ણ વિશ્વાસ છે એને નિરાશ થવાનું કશું જ કારણ નથી.

## ઝેરવેરની આંધી

ઘણે ઠેકાણે જ્યાં સત્યાગ્રહ મુલતવી રાખવામાં આવેલ છે ત્યાં તેનો ગેરલાભ લેવાય એમ પણ બને છતાં પ્રતિકૂળ વાતાવરણ વચ્ચે સત્યાગ્રહ ચાલુ રાખવામાં જે જોખમ સમાએલું છે તેના પ્રમાણમાં પહેલું જોખમ બહુ નજીવું ગણાય. એટલે એ વિષે ચિંતા કરવાનું કારણ ન હોવું જોઇએ. સત્યાગ્રહીને એવો વિશ્વાસ હોવો જોઇએ કે આજે ઝેર અને હિંસાની જે આંધી આવેલી છે તે તો ક્ષણિક છે. વટોળિયાની માફક એ જોતજોતામાં શમી જશે. નિર્મળ વાતાવરણ પાછું છવાશે ત્યારે એનો વખત વળી પાછો આવશે. એ સમય આવે ત્યાં સુધી પોતે પોતાથી બને તેટલા સર્વ પ્રયત્નથી મનવચનકર્મે કરીને સંયમ કેળવવા પ્રયત્ન કરે અને આજે વર્તી રહેલું વાતાવરણ જેમ બને તેમ જલદી શુધ્ધ કરવામાં મદદરૂપ થાય.

## નામના અને નકલી સુધારા

એક તરફથી પ્રજાને ઘાતકી, અમાનુષી અને જંગલી રીતે દબાવવાના સઘળા પ્રયત્નો કરવામાં આવે છે અને ધાકધમકીઓ વિગેરે અયોગ્ય સાધનોનો ઉપયોગ કરી વફાદારીના પત્રો

ઉપર જબરદસ્તીથી સહીઓ કરાવવામાં આવે છે જ્યારે બીજી તરફથી નામના અને નકલી સુધારા દાખલ કરી દુનિયાની આંખે પાટા બાંધી કોઈ પણ જાતની ખરી સત્તા ન છોડતાં ચાલતા આવેલા સડેલા તંત્રને નવા વાઘા પહેરાવી પ્રજાતંત્રના ખોટા નામથી જેમ ચલતુ આવ્યું છે તેમનું તેમ ચલાવવું છે. પુરાણી પ્રથાના પક્ષકારોઓ પૈકી કેટલાક તો એમ પણ કહે છે કે પ્રજા લાયક નથી એટલે બીજો શું ઉપાય ?

## અનાદિ કાળથી આવેલો અધિકાર

આ પ્રજાની લાયકાતની વાતો કરનારાઓએ એકે દિવસ એવો વિચાર કર્યો છે ખરો કે આ દેશમાં છસો જેટલાં રજવાડાં છે તેમાંથી કેટલાના નરેશો પોતાની પ્રજા કરતાં વધારે લાયકાત ધરાવનારા છે? શું રાજકુટુંબમાં જન્મ લેનારા સઘળા લાયકાતના વારસા સાથે જ જન્મે છે? અને જો અનેક રાજાઓમાંથી કેટલાક તો રાજ્ય કરવાને નાલાયક હોવા જ જોઇએ એ વાત કબૂલ હોય તો એવા સંજોગોમાં પ્રજાએ શું કરવું એનો કાંઇ ઉપાય બતાવશે ખરા ? જુલ્મી રાજાને પદભ્રષ્ટ કરવાનો અધિકાર અનાદિ કાળથી સ્વીકારાએલો છે. ઇતિહાસ એ વાતની સાક્ષી પૂરે છે. એટલે રાજાપ્રજાએ લાયકાતમાં ઉતર્યા વગર આધુનિક યુગને ઓળખી તેને અનુકૂળ થવામાંજ બેઉનું હિત સમાએલું છે.

## પ્રજાને દબાવવાનાં પગલાં

પણ આજે તો કેટલાક રાજાઓ એકત્ર થઇ સંગઠિત રૂપે પ્રજાને દબાવવાનાં પગલાં લેવામાં પોતાનું શ્રેય માનતા જોવામાં આવે છે અને ઓછામાં ઓછી પણ સત્તા છોડયા સિવાય રાજતંત્રમાં ઉપરચોટિયા ફેરફાર કરવાની મોટા આડંબરવાળી યોજના ઘડી કાઢી એથી આગળ કોઇ રાજ્યે જવું જ નહિ એવી વ્યવસ્થા રચવામાં પોતાની સઘળી શકિત ખરચી રહ્યા છે.

જુદાં જુદાં રાજ્યોની જુદી જુદી પરિસ્થિતિ હોવા છતાં સંગઠનના અથવા સત્તાની ઇતરાજીના દબાણથી સૌને આમ એક અસ્ત્રે મૂંડવા જતાં કાચું કપાઇ જવાનું છે એ વિચાર કરતા નથી. જ્યાં સુધી ખરી સત્તા પ્રજાના હાથમાં નહિ આવે ત્યાંસુધી પ્રજાને સંતોષ થવાનો નથી એ જાણવા છતાં આ નિશ્ચિત વસ્તુને કોઇપણ પ્રકારે ઠેલવાનો મિથ્યા પ્રયત્ન કરવામાં

આવે છે. આખરે તો એ બધું પાણી વલોવવાનું છોડી દઇ પ્રજાને રીઝવીને જ કામ લેવું પડશે.

## ભાવનગરના મરહૂમ મહામુત્સદ્દી

હવે આપણે ભાવનગરનો વિચાર કરીએ. ભાવનગરમાં પ્રવેશ કરતાંની સાથે આપણને પ્રથમ સ્મરણ સ્વ૦ સર પ્રભાશંકર પટણીનું થાય છે. એ મહામુત્સદ્દીની ખોટ કાઠિયાવાડમાં આજે ડગલે ને પગલે માલમ પડે છે. એમના ગયા પછી કાઠિયાવાડમાં આજે કોઇ રાજનીતિજ્ઞ પુરુષ રહ્યો નથી જેની અસર આજે આખા કાઠિયાવાડમાં જણાઇ રહી છે. સર પ્રભાશંકર હયાત હોત તો ઘરઆંગણે ગાંધીજીને અનશન કરવા વખત આવવા ન જ દેત. કાઠિયાવાડની આજે જે બેઆબરૂ થઇ રહી છે તે તેઓ કદી સાંખત નહિ.

## ભાવનગરના શુભ સંજોગ

કાઠિયાવાડમાં આજે ચોમેર દાવાનળ સળગી રહ્યો છે. ઠેકઠેકાણેથી છડેચોક ગુંડાગીરી, લૂંટફાટ અને અત્યાચારોની વાતો આવી રહી છે અને પ્રજાને દબાવવાના તેમજ પ્રજાસંગઠનો અને પરિષદો તોડવાના વ્યવસ્થિત પ્રયત્નો થાય છે. કેટલાંક રાજ્યોમાં રાજ્યના જુલ્મો અસહ્ય થઇ પડતાં લોકો રાજ્ય છોડી ભાગી છુટે છે ત્યારે અહીંયાં આપણે રાજ્ય અને પ્રજા વચ્ચે બેઉને છાજતી સભ્યતા અને મીઠાશનો અનુભવ કરી રહ્યા છીએ.

પ્રજાના જુદા જુદા વર્ગો વચ્ચે અહીં કલેશ કે વિખવાદ નથી અને આપણે રાજ્ય તેમજ પ્રજાના પરસ્પરના હક અને જવાબદારીની ઝીણાવટથી તેમજ સંપૂર્ણ છૂટથી ચર્ચા કરી શકીએ છીએ. સદ્ભાગ્યે પરિષદના કાર્ય વિષે તેમજ તેના ઉદ્દેશ વિષે રાજ્યને કશી શંકાનું કારણ મળ્યું નથી. જવાબદાર રાજ્યતંત્ર મેળવવાનો ઉદ્દેશ પરિષદના બંધારણમાં પ્રથમથી જ દાખલ છે. છતાં દરબારશ્રીની છત્રછાયા નીચે જ પ્રજા પરિષદ પોતાની પ્રગતિ સાધવા ઇચ્છે છે એ વિષે કે રાજ્ય પ્રત્યેની વફાદારી વિષે કોઇને કશી શંકા કરવાનું કારણ મળ્યું નથી.

આ ઉપરાંત, ભાવનગર રાજ્ય સમૃધ્ધ છે. રાજ્યને માથે કશું દેવું નથી. ઉલટી એની પાસે ઠીક મૂડી છે. રાજની આવક પણ પ્રમાણમાં સારી છે. આ બધા

૨ ૭૫



શુભ સંજોગો મોટે ભાગે તો મરહૂમ સર પ્રભાશંકરના દુરદેશ અને કુનેહભર્યા રાજ્યવહીવટને આભારી છે. આજના કઠણ સંજોગોમાં જો એઓ હયાત હોત તો કાઠિયાવાડનું ઢાકું ગમે તે રીતે ઉકલી જાત અને ગાંધીજીને મહાસાગર છોડી ખાબોચિયામાં ભરાઇ રહેવાનો વખત કદી ન આવત.

સર પ્રભાશંકર તો આજે નથી પણ ભાવનગર રાજ્યની પ્રજાને એમના પુત્રને સોંપી ગયા છે અને સ્વાભાવિક રીતેજ સૌ આશા રાખે છે કે તેઓ પોતાના પ્રતાપી પિતાને પગલે ચાલી ઉદાર વૃત્તિના યુવાન મહારાજાને સાચી સલાહ અને સહાય આપી કાઠિયાવાડનું કલંક ધોઇ નાંખશે અને ભાવનગરની કીર્તિ વધારશે.

## એક જ ઠરાવ કરવાનો અવસર

પાછલી પરિષદોમાં આપણે ઘણા ઘણા ઠરાવો કર્યા છે. કુંડલા મુકામે છેલ્લી પરિષદ મળી તેમાં તો આપણે લગભગ ૪૦ જેટલા ઠરાવો કર્યા. એ બધા ઠરાવો ફરી ફરીને કરવાનો કશો અર્થ નથી. હવે તો એ વખત આવ્યો છે કે જ્યારે આપણે મૂળ મુદ્દાની વસ્તુ ઉપર એક જ ઠરાવ કરવો જોઇએ અને એ ઠરાવનો અમલ જો આપણે કરાવી શકીએ એટલે કે પ્રજાને જવાબદાર રાજ્યતંત્ર મળી રહે એવું રાજ્યબંધારણ આપણે રાજ પાસેથી મેળવી શકીએ તો પછી બીજા ઠરાવોની બહુ આવશ્યકતા નથી રહેતી.

રાજ્યની મુખ્ય વસ્તી ખેડૂતોની છે. ઘણાંખરાં દેશી રાજ્યોનો ભાર ગામડાંમાં વસતા ગરીબ ખેડૂતોની કમ્મર ઉપર જ પડે છે. રાજ્ય વહીવટમાં એનો અવાજ નથી. અજ્ઞાન, અભણ અને ભોળો હોવાથી પોતાના હકનું એને કશું ભાન પણ નથી. ભગવાન પર ભરોસો રાખી દરેક દુઃખનો દોષ કેવળ કીસ્મત ઉપર જ નાંખવાની ટેવવાળો હોવાથી એનામાં આત્મવિશ્વાસનો અભાવ આવી ગયો છે. જવાબદાર રાજ્યતંત્ર માગવાનો કે મેળવવાનો જો કંઇપણ અર્થ હોય તો તે તો આ ભૂખ અને દુઃખથી પીડાતા અસંખ્ય હાડપિંજર જેવા કમરમાંથી વળી ગએલા દેશી રાજ્યોના દુઃખી ખેડૂતનાં દુઃખ ભાગવાનો અને એનામાં સ્વમાન અને આત્મવિશ્વાસનાં માનુષી તત્ત્વોનો સંચાર કરાવવાનો જ હોઇ શકે. એ કામ કરવામાં રાજ્ય અને પ્રજા બેઉનું સામાન્ય હીત

સમાએલું છે. જો આ ખેડુતોને રાજ્યના વહીવટની સંસ્થાઓમાં પૂરતું પ્રતિનિધિત્વ મળે અને એનો અવાજ રાજદરબારમાં સંભળાતો થાય તો એ રાજતંત્ર જવાબદાર ગણાય અને એના દુઃખનો રસ્તો નીકળી શકે.

એટલે જવાબદાર રાજતંત્ર વીષે ઠરાવ કરીએ તો પછી ખેડૂત, મજૂર, મ્યુનિસિપાલીટી, ગ્રામ્યપંચાયત, ઋણમુકિત, લાંચરૂશ્વત, વેઠવારા, દારૂનિષધ, વગેરે વીષે જુદાજુદા ઠરાવો પરિષદમાં કરવાની જરૂર ન રહે.

## રાજના જાહેરનામાનું ખોખું

રાજ તરફથી હાલમાં એક નાનું સરખું જાહેરનામું પ્રસિધ્ધ કરવામાં આવ્યું છે. એ જાહેરનામામાં અહીંના રાજતંત્રમાં કરવામાં આવનાર ફેરફારનું ઝાંખું ચિત્ર દોરવાનો પ્રયત્ન કરવામાં આવ્યો છે. એના ઉપર પરિષદે વિચાર કરવો રહ્યો છે. આ જાહેરાતમાં પ્રજાને સંતોષ થઇ શકે એવું કશું જોવામાં આવતું નથી. એટલે આપણે દુઃખથી, નમ્રતાથી, પણ અતિશય દ્રઢતાથી એ વાત રાજને સંભળાવવી જોઇએ. જાહેરાતમાં ધારાસભાના ખોખાનો જે ચિતાર આપ્યો છે તે ઘણોજ અપૂર્ણ હોવાથી એના ઉપર ઝાઝું કહેવું કઠણ છે. પરંતુ એટલું તો સ્પષ્ટ જ છે કે ગમે તેવી ધારાસભા બનાવવામાં આવે તોયે એ તો એક સલાહકાર મંડળજ હશે. એટલે એ પ્રાણ વિનાનું ખોખું હશે. જો જાહેરાતનો આ અર્થ સાચો હોય તો આપણે મક્કમપણે જાહેર કરવું જોઇએ કે એથી પ્રજાને મુદલ સંતોષ નહિં થાય. કારણ કે જવાબદારી વિનાનો સલાહ આપવાનો અધિકાર એ તો માત્ર ટીકાકારોને જ તૈયાર કરી શકે, એમાંથી રાજતંત્ર ચલાવવાની કે પ્રજાઘડતરની તાલીમ ન જ મળી શકે. અને એવી બીનજવાબદાર ટીકાકાર થવાની તાલીમ લેવામાં કોઇ સારા માણસોને કશો રસ ન જ પડે.

પ્રજા લાયક ન થાય ત્યાં સુધી જવાબદારી સોંપાય નહિ અને જવાબદારી મળ્યા સિવાય લાયકાત આવે નહિ એવાં અવળસવળ સુત્રોનાં આધાર લઇ ઘાણીના બળદની માફક ગોળ ચકરાવામાં ફર્યા કરવાથી કોઇ દિવસ અંત ન આવે.

## આજે આવેલો અમુલ્ય અવસર

આ રાજ્યમાં જે અનુકૂળતા મળે છે તેવી બીજે ભાગ્યે જ

હશે. પ્રજાપરિષદને સ્થાપન કરવામાં અથવા એને ચલાવવામાં મરહૂમ મહાઅમાત્ય પટણી સાહેબનો સાથ અને આશિર્વાદ હતા. પરિષદ પ્રત્યે રાજની અમીદૃષ્ટિ રહેતી આવી છે. પરિષદનું ધ્યેય રાજથી અજાણ્યું નથી. રાજ અને પ્રજાનો અતિશય મીઠો સંબંધ રહ્યો છે. રાજ્યમાં ઠીક ઠીક કાબેલ માણસો વસે છે. જેઓ રાજ્યકારભારનો ભાર ઉંચકવામાં હોંશથી અને નિઃસ્વાર્થપણે મદદ કરવા તૈયાર થઇ શકે એમ છે. રાજ્ય સાધનસંપન્ન છે. પ્રજા વફાદાર છે. દરબારશ્રીએ દેશદેશ વર ફરી આધુનિક જગત જોયું છે અને પોતે ઉદારવૃત્તિ અને ઉદાર વિચાર ધરાવે છે. દિવાનસાહેબે લાયક પિતાનો વારસો મેળવ્યો છે. આ બધા અનુકૂળ સંજોગો ભાવનગરને કાઠિયાવાડના આજના અંધકારમાં દીપકરૂપ બની માર્ગદર્શક થવાનો અમૂલ્ય અવસર પ્રાપ્ત કરી આપે છે અને તેથી ભાવનગર ઉપર અનેક આશાઓ બંધાઇ છે. પ્રભુ એ આશાઓ પૂર્ણ કરો અને ભાવનગરની જાહોજલાલી, સુખશાંતિ અને કીર્તિમાં વધારો થાઓ !

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